

Enchanted

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Summary: Seven years after graduation, their friendship torn apart by life, Bella, Cleo, Emma and Rikki lead very different lives. No longer in contact, Rikki struggles through parenthood, Bella faces a heartbreak by her first love and Emma must deal with unrequited love. Cleo's happiness won't last long as familiar faces from the past return to haunt the mako mermaids.

1. Chapter 1

Before I start, I just want to note that I don't own any of the characters from the show H2O: Just Add Water but I do own any characters that I create and add to the story.

So, I am really excited about this book and I have many ideas about the storyline and I hope to upload regularly. Maybe every two or three days depending on the amount of homework I get. This first chapter is mainly about Bella and Will, with a little about Cleo and Rikki. I have lots planned for the characters! I hope you like it!

Chapter One

7 Years Later

Rikki stumbled, gripping the desk with sweaty fingers, frantically trying to keep her balance. A yell escaped her lips as she clutched her bulging stomach with her other hand.

"Zane!" Rikki managed to cry, bending over with another yell. She was faintly aware of the sound of footsteps, running up the stairs, taking two steps at a time.

Suddenly, Zane was at her side, placing a hand at the small of her back.

"Rikki! Okay, we have to get you to the hospital!"

"Duh!" Rikki groaned in agony.

Zane, who was shaking beside her, led her down the stairs. Rikki prepared herself for the pain ahead.

Bella POV

"Bella!"

I stretched, letting out a long sigh which soon turned into a groan. Sitting up, I watched Caroline slide the curtains across, letting the sun shine through the window by my bed. I groaned again, pulling my bed covers over my face and sinking back down into the mattress.

"Go away," I murmured from under the covers.

When I heard no reply, I moved the blanket just enough to have a good view of Caroline who was bouncing around my bedroom in her dressing gown.

She apparently took no offence by my tone, as she pulled dress after dress out of my wardrobe.

"Come on! Big day!" I watched as she studied every outfit, choosing some she liked and throwing them onto the bed.

"Big day?" I asked, frowning as a hanger hit my leg.

"Okay... I say..." Caroline ignored me, picking up a pair of my favourite heels. "These blue heels, skinny jeans and... This top! With your brown leather jacket."

I rolled my eyes with a sigh and ran a hand through my hair.

"No. Slippers. PJ's. Dressing gown."

Caroline headed for the door, laughing brightly.

As she left, she called over her shoulder, "Be strong!"

Rubbing my eyes wearily, I swung my legs out of the warmth of the covers. It took all of my energy to get dressed and leave the apartment.

Bella POV

I tightened my grip on the steering wheel, biting my lip. I ran over everything I was going to say in my head, running a shaking hand through my curled hair.

I paused at the red traffic light, taking the chance to glance at my phone.

"Bella?"

I glanced through the rolled down window and frowned. The woman to my left looked about my age, with her curled black hair reaching her shoulders. I eyed her outfit. It included a black leather jacket,

black skinny jeans and boots. At her side, I spotted a golden labrador, eagerly licking her hand. The woman was smiling at me while I just stared.

"Bella? It's Cleo. Cleo Sertori."

I drew in my breath. The light remained red.

"Cleo?" I smiled shyly. "Wow... Uh, Hi. You look..."

She looked down at herself and grinned. The lab jumped up and started licking Cleo's face.

"Yeah." She stroked her dog affectionately, fingering her hair. "I needed a change."

She looked like she wanted to say more but I had turned my eyes to the road as the orange light flashed to green.

"Uh, well... I'll see you!" I stuttered and returned her smile.

I slammed my foot on the brake and turned the corner hearing a faint "bye" from Cleo.

Bella POV

I paused, feeling butterflies in my stomach. I wanted to run. As far away as possible. But I knew that I had no choice but to knock on the door.

"I'll be right there!"

I shuffled from one foot to the other, my breathing uneven. I heard footsteps on the carpet in the hall and watched as the door handle began to turn.

The door opened. My heart began to thud against my ribcage at the sight of him.

I studied him, taking in his perfect tousled hair, the colour of his eyes, knowing that it will be the last time I see him.

"Bella."

I kept a straight face when all I wanted to do was jump him.

"Hi, Will."

I watched him as he stared at the floor, inviting me in. I walked in avoiding his gaze. The apartment looked the same. Yet different. The leather couch. The TV. But things were missing. Then I realised. My things were missing.

"Well... I should take my things and go..." I ran a finger over a sea shell on the coffee table.

I turned my head round, just in time to watch him nod. I turned to walk to the bedroom.

"Uh, Bella?"

I turned my head and looked at him curiously.

"I'll see you."

I nodded, remembering saying this to Cleo before. And I knew neither of us meant it.

I hope you enjoyed this first chapter! I think that the next chapter will be about Emma. Please review! I'd love to hear what you think. Thanks for reading! Bye!

2. Chapter Two: Forgotten Love

Chapter Two

Forgotten Love

Emma POV

I frowned as I heard a knock on the door. Without looking up, I answered, pulling the latex gloves from my fingers.

"Can you send Oliver Jackson in, please?" I pushed my hair back from face, frowning at the papers in my hands. I heard the door open and someone cough behind me

I swivelled round in my chair and immediately blushed an embarrassing red.

"Oh, hey, Ash." I fumbled with my pen nervously, my lips stretching into a smile.

I watched him smile half-heartedly and shuffle into the middle of the room.

"Are you okay?" I asked, aware of how uncomfortable he looked.

He looked at the clock on the wall before turning back to me.

"Listen, Emma..." He spoke for the first time, rubbing at the back of his neck. "I have some news but I need to talk to you about it first."

I nodded, leaning back in my chair, listening intently.

"Sure, go ahead..." I replied, continuing to stare at him curiously.

"This is really... difficult... Especially since..."

I nodded slowly, waiting patiently for him to speak, eyebrows furrowed in concern.

"Tell me." I smiled encouragingly, not at all expecting the words that were about to be spoken next.

Ash took a deep breath and sighed.

"Emma. I'm going to ask Amy to marry me."

*** Flashback ***

Emma POV

Flowers. Everywhere. And all colours. Light pinks. Dark reds.

Sighing, I noticed a card leaning beside the bouquet of lillies. Daringly, I reached out and picked up the card.

Dear Emma,

This crazy, romantic gesture is to remind you that I will always love you.

Love, Ash.

"Oh, you are so lucky!"

I dropped the card back onto the counter and turned to look at Amy. She was smelling a lone red rose that Ash had placed on my work.

"Lucky!" I cried, spinning round, not being able to face the flowers. "Lucky. I don't know what to do! He keeps doing these romantic things and I keep rejecting him!"

Amy looked up and bit her lip.

"Call him. One last time. And if you truly don't want to be with him, you'll tell him." She jumped onto the counter and swung her legs childishly.

I paused, then nodded. "Okay. Okay! Yeah, I can do it."

I reached into my pocket and began to dial, fingers trembling. Just as I was about to call, I glanced around the room and ran a hand through my hair.

"What am I going to do about these flowers?! Samuel Todd is coming in for a check-up after lunch."

Amy's legs stopped swinging. She jumped down and began grabbing the bouquets.

"Leave it to me!"

I left the room and made my way to the staff room. I held my phone to my ear and took several deep breaths.

"Hello?"

I stopped abruptly, biting my lip.

"Uh, Ash? Hi. Um..."

"Emma?"

I swallowed. "Look, you can't- It's just... We really need to talk. Do you think you could come round in an hour or so? It's, uh- really important..."

*** End of Flashback ***

I tried to digest what he had just said. It took several minutes for me to react. I tried to swallow, gripping the chair and dropping my gaze to the floor. The polished floor began to blur and I was aware of tears threatening to fall from my eyes. I couldn't bring myself to look at Ash but continued to stare at the floor, as if memorized by it.

"Em, there- Ash? Hey! What are you doing here?"

I immediately turned in my chair and tried to focus on my work, feeling the guilt spread like wild fire at her friendly voice. Why do I feel like this? I pushed away the thought and tried to read the words on the sheet in front of me. I reread a sentence over and over without taking it in. I was too focused on Ash and Amy's conversation.

"I came to take you to lunch. I also needed to talk to Emma..."

I bit my lip, fumbling with the papers.

"Aw! I'll be ready in about 5 minutes? Oh! Emma..." I heard her turn round to face me.

"Emma?"

I breathed in sharply but turned. She smiled. "Will Benjamin is here to see you!"

She winked and I plastered a grin onto my face.

Trembling, I stood and kept my eyes on the door. I felt my legs shake. Married. They were getting married. When I turned the corner in the corridor, and was sure I was out of sight, I held my head in my hands.

Hope you enjoyed this chapter about Emma! It's quite long but I couldn't find the right place to end it. I think that the next chapter will be about Cleo. Then the one after that will be Rikki which I can't wait for! It will be FILL of drama! Thanks for reading. Please review!

3. Chapter Three: Patience

Chapter Three

Patience

Cleo POV

"Lewis? Are you home?"

I staggered into our apartment, shopping bags in hands and an excited

Fraser leaping around. Once we were inside, I kicked the door shut and dumped the bags down causing a baguette to roll onto the floor. Sighing, I placed my handbag on the counter and grabbed Fraser's lead, trying to unhook it from his collar. He wasn't making it easy.

"Fraser! Sit. Sit! Ugh-"

I managed to unhook the lead just as I heard a familiar voice.

"Cleo?"

I watched wearily as Fraser ran past me and into the kitchen.

I followed, leaving the bags of food behind.

Lewis was sitting at the table frowning at the laptop.

"Hey." I walked over and planted a kiss on his cheek. I glanced at the laptop screen and nodded, pulling out a chair and sitting down with interest. He pushed the laptop round to give me a better view.

"Anything?" I asked, already knowing the answer by his expression.

"No. Nothing both in the area and in our price range..."

On the screen was the house we were set on getting. I stared at the price for what seemed like the hundredth time.

"Well... We'll find something." I rubbed Lewis' arm reassuringly as I stood.

I made my way back to the front door and reluctantly picked up the bags. I spotted my handbag on the counter where I'd left it. I managed to pick it up and entered the kitchen. Lewis immediately saw my trouble and rushed over to help. As we put the food away I remembered.

"I saw Bella today."

I eyed Lewis as he shoved the frozen peas into the freezer.

He frowned. "Bella..." He turned to stare at me curiously.

"Bella? As in Bella Hartley?"

When I nodded, his eyes widened but he carried on trying to fit everything into the fridge.

"Oh. Well, what did she say?"

I closed the cupboard and glanced at my handbag. "Oh, not much..." I put my hands on my hips and thought back to our meeting.

"She was at the traffic lights so we didn't speak for long. She looks good. Cut her hair." I smiled. "She looked pretty surprised to see me and my hair."

He smiled, shut the fridge door and squeezed my hand.

I breathed in sharply. "Lewis, this is killing me. I got it."

Lewis breathed out and nodded.

I rushed over to take the brown bag from my handbag. Turning back, I caught Lewis smiling. I headed for the bathroom.

Cleo POV

I pushed open the door and saw Lewis staring intently.

I sighed, holding up the plastic stick in my hand.

"It's negative."

Lewis looked at me sympathetically and I could see disappointment in his eyes. He walked over and pulled me into a hug.

Sorry this chapter was so short and wasn't as interesting as the others but I didn't want to rush into their drama yet. And I'm half asleep... Next episode is big. It may drag out into two or three chapters if I can't fit it all in. The next chapter will probably be split into different POV's and not just one. And it may take longer to write but bare with me! Please review! Thanks!

4. Chapter Four: Questions

Chapter Four

Questions

Bella POV

I finished off my coffee and sighed, getting up from the uncomfortable staff room chairs. I walked over to the coffee machine to get myself another cup, spotting Ash making his way to the counter and adding milk to his coffee. I stood beside him, with a sigh.

"Hey."

I watched him gulp down his drink with a sour expression.

"Bad day?" I asked, pouring coffee into my cup.

Ash nodded and put down his drink. He turned to face me and rubbed his eyes.

"I told Emma."

I took sip and nodded, trying to find the right thing to say.

"I didn't have the best weekend either. I went back to the apartment to get my stuff."

I stared into my coffee mug, thinking of Will. I was having a good

time crashing at Caroline's but I felt a constant ache being apart from Will.

"Ash?"

I returned to reality and looked up, past where Ash stood. Standing in the doorway was a tall blonde, dressed in brown boots, a white short skirt and a pale top. From her neck hung a beautiful pendant with a blue diamond, matching her eye colour perfectly. Her deep icy blue eyes were familiar and I furrowed my eyebrows, desperately trying to remember why.

"Emma? What are you doing here?" Ash asked, sounding genuinely surprised.

I opened my mouth, my eyes wide with shock.

"Wait- Emma?" I breathed in sharply as Emma eyed me suspiciously.

"Yeah, hi... Do I know you?" Emma frowned, looking at Ash then back at me.

I put down my cup and walked over to her with a sheepish smile.

"Bella. Bella Hartley." I watched as Emma's expression mirrored my own. "This is quite... odd. I actually ran into Cleo- uh, Sertori? Are you still in contact with her? Or Rikki Chadwick?"

Emma raised her eyebrows. "Wow, I haven't seen you since... Um... Or Cleo and Rikki. I've stayed in touch with Will though-"

"Really?" I exclaimed, putting my hands on my hips and looking away. "I didn't know."

Emma, who just realised what she said, bit her lip.

"So! Are you a teacher here too?"

I tucked my hair behind my ears and shook my head.

"I'm the new school guidance counselor."

Emma nodded with a smile and looked back at Ash.

Feeling the tension, I stuttered, "Ash tells me your an orthontist?"

Emma nodded again but I doubt she heard a word I said. She continued to stare at Ash.

"Ash, can we talk?"

We both stared as Ash moved, for the first time since Emma's arrival. He nodded slightly and they began to leave the staff room.

I quickly ran over to Emma as she turned to walk away, reaching for her arm.

"Wait! Uh... How's... Will?" I managed to ask, in a voice which I hoped sounded bright.

Emma turned and her eyes were sympathetic.

"He's actually here with me now." She replied, making me dropped my hand. I nodded and watched Emma turn to leave again but this time I let her.

I walked back over to the table I had previously been sitting at. I sank lower into the seat with a groan.

Emma POV

I followed Ash through the hallways, passing empty classrooms as we went. Finally, Ash turned into a room and I followed.

He walked over to, what I presumed was his desk, and turned slowly, as if bracing himself. He looked at me expectantly.

"Why didn't you tell me Bella started working here?" I found myself blurting out.

I watched Ash as he looked down at the floor with a sigh.

"Emma. I didn't know if you- Well, wanted to know. I didn't want to bring up any bad memories."

"It was years ago, Ash. Years ago." I snapped back. I should have stopped there but I didn't. "We've moved on! Bella clearly has. And I have to!"

I glared at Ash, thinking that was the end.

"Well, have you?! When you saw Bella, you looked like you wanted to run away!"

Yes, I wanted to run. But not from Bella.

I took a deep, and well needed, breath. "Look, what I came here to say is..."

I started my already-prepared speech. "When you told me that you were going to propose to Amy... I was shocked. But after thinking about it, I realised that... You and Amy are... perfect together and... I... can't wait to help with the preparations! Because..." I smiled fondly. "Amy's going to need my help."

Ash smiled, amused and I sighed in relief, knowing the argument was over. I bit my lip as the bell rang. I heard footsteps and sounds coming from the corridor, leaving me no choice but to head for the door.

As I did so, I turned round to Ash.

"Bye, Ash."

Bella POV

As I made my way back to my office, I scanned the hallway, not

wanting an unexpectant, and certainly unwanted, meeting. Once I was in the safety of my office, with the door closed, I relaxed. I know I was being immature but I wasn't planning on seeing Will ever again. Though the thought hurt.

I sat down in my chair and put my head in my hands. I was being silly. Will probably didn't come into the school. He was probably sitting in Emma's car waiting for her.

A knock on the door interrupted my thoughts. I lifted my head and tried to look busy.

"Come in!"

The door slowly opened, and someone stuck their head round the door.

"Will."

He opened the door fully, walking in and shutting it behind him.

I straightened in my seat, picking up my pen just to have something to do.

"Uh... Hey, Will. How have you been?"

I frowned at the sight of him. He looked good. He was wearing a light grey shirt, jeans, his purple converse and his brown leather jacket. The brown leather jacket I had bought for. The thought stung, but at the same time, I wanted to smile.

Will took a seat, opposite where I sat. I crossed my legs and fixed my hair, trying to be subtle.

"I want us to be friends."

I bit the inside of my cheek, tightening my grip on the pen in my hand.

"Ash and Emma manage to be friends-"

"You never told me you were friends with Emma. In all the time we dated. Why not? And... you know I work here. So you purposely came with Emma, knowing you'll see me. Is 'being friends' all you wanted to talk about?"

I stared at Will curiously, imaging every possible answer he could give.

Emma and Will are dating.

He came to see me.

Was he going to give the jacket back? This one hurt the most. If he gave back the leather jacket, it shows that he's moved on... But I've already moved on. I did when I picked up my stuff from the apartment.

Will finally spoke, rubbing his face with his hand.

"Emma and I became friends after we broke up. And I did come here to ask to be friends! I don't want to never see you again, and if we do see each other, I don't want it to be awkward-"

There was a knock on the door and Jessica Wright stuck her head round.

"It's alright, come in, Jessica."

Will got up but continued to stare at me. I nodded at him and returned his smile.

When he left, I immediately frowned.

"So, take a seat, Jessica."

Will POV

I jogged over to the car, pulling open the door and sliding in. We sat in silence for a while.

"How did it go?"

"Awful. You?"

Emma groaned, starting the engine. "Awful."

Thanks for reading! The next chapter is at the hospital! Am so excited to start writing it! If you read my authors note, sorry again for changing it! It will be better this way, though! Sorry for any bad spelling or grammar!

5. Chapter Five: Time

Chapter Five

Time

Cleo POV.

I pushed open the glass doors, mildly aware of the click sound my boots were making against the white marble.

I made my way to the dark-haired woman at reception. She smiled as I opened my mouth to speak, fumbling with my jacket, awkwardly. I felt a shoulder brush against mine.

"Excuse me-"

I turned my head, my hair whipping around my shoulders. I watched as the man behind me trembled, trying to steady the three take away coffee's in his hands.

"Oh! Sorry!"

I stared, instantly forgetting the woman who was smiling expectantly at me.

"Um... Excuse me?" I stuttered, my mouth opening and closing, not

knowing what to say. The man looked round and I bit my lip. He stared back, mouth hanging open in astonishment.

"Cleo!?"

I nodded, startled. I recognised his face but from where?

"Cleo! Oh, uh- Wow. It's uh- Zane. Zane Bennett."

The women behind the desk coughed and I looked round in a daze.

"Yes, Cleo Sertori? Can you take a seat in the waiting room, please? Dr-"

"Oh- Thank you!" I blushed, fidgeting in my jacket.

I glanced back at Zane who continued to stare. I walked away from the desk as Zane followed. Once I was sure the receptionist wouldn't be able to hear, I grabbed Zane's arm.

"What are you doing here?"

Zane stared down at the coffee in his hand and swallowed.

"Rikki- She's... In labour..."

I dropped my arm and covered my mouth with my hand, dramatically.

Bella POV

I paused, mid-step. Raising an eyebrow, I looked to my right. Through the cafe window I could clearly see Will. Sitting at a table. Drinking a cup of tea. I let out a quick breath, mentally slapping my forehead. Everywhere I go. Will. I took a step forward, debating whether to be on my way or to say 'hello'.

"Sorry."

I moved as a blonde tried to step around me. I glanced at her, then looked back through the window at Will. He was getting to his feet, looking through the window from inside. I froze, dropping my gaze to study a piece of dried up chewing gum on the ground.

Finally, I dared myself to look up. When I did, I felt as if someone had punched me in the stomach. The blonde, who I had previously seen, was sitting down opposite Will, laughing as she put down her bag. Without a second thought, I walked passed the cafe, heart thumping loudly.

Cleo POV

Zane opened the door, walking in and setting down the coffee cups in the bedside table.

I watched from the corridor as Rikki raised her head.

"About time! Where have you been?"

My eyes widened as I saw her. She looked older but still beautiful. Her hair, instead of being the light blonde I remember, was now a dirty blonde.

"I bumped into someone... Uh-." Zane walked to the door, nodding at me to enter. I stared at the ground as I did, avoiding Rikki's gaze.

"Cleo?! What are you-?" Rikki's startled voice was cut short as she let out a scream. I flinched, finally raising my head. Zane was at Rikki's side, his hand in hers. Someone moved from the corner and I spun round, unaware of their presence. The doctor moved passed me, towards where Rikki lay, shrieking.

"Your going to have to start pushing now."

I bit down on the nail on my thumb and backed out of the room, quietly, unsure of what to do.

"No! Cleo!" Rikki yelled helplessly, sucking in her breath through her teeth. "Please! Stay!"

Sorry that this chapter is so short. I had writers block and didn't really have time. Also, the wi-fi on my phone has been messed up but it's fine now soo... I will upload the next chapter soon.

6. Chapter Six: Point of View

Chapter Six

Point of View

Will POV

My gaze left the window I had been staring through in a daze, to rest on the familiar waitress, walking to my table. Christine smiled brightly at me.

>"Will! I haven't seen you in here for a while! Truffles is going under without Bella and your daily visits!"
I smiled half-heartedly, avoiding Christine's gaze.

>"And where is Bella? Should I assume you want the usual?"
I groan inwardly, knowing that coming here wasn't my best idea. I had purposely sat as far away as possible from our corner booth.

>"Yes, but minus the latte and chocolate bun."
Christine stared at me quizzically, noting down my order in her pad. "Just an expresso? No Bella?"

>"Yeah. Uh... I'm actually here for a job interview. I'm hoping to transfer to ESL."
Christine nodded enthusiastically. "Oh! That's great! I hope it goes well!"

>I plastered a smile on my face as Christine walked away but when she turned, my smile faded. I rubbed my eyes, groaning inwardly.
I continued to stare out of the window, wringing my hands together.

>Suddenly, I notice a blonde women passing the window in a hurry. I stand as she enters, hands shaking. Miss Russel walks over, raising a hand.
"Will Benjamin?"

>I nod, shaking her hand nervously.
Miss Russel takes a seat, putting her bag by her feet and laughing freely.

>"Sorry I'm late! I got a little caught up with work. So. Shall we

get started?"<p>

Just a short chapter about Will. Poor Will. I'm dreading writing the chapter about how they broke up. Hope you enjoyed. Please review.

7. Authors Note

I have decided to split the next chapter into two as there is too much happening. I have nearly finished the first chapter and will upload it today. The next one may take longer to write but I have it planned out, I just need to write it. I hope you've found this interesting so far! Please vote, fan but most importantly, comment!

>:-)<p>

8. Chapter Seven: Long Time, No See

Chapter Seven

Long Time, No See

Rikki POV

I gazed down to stare into the startling blue eyes of my baby.

My daughter.

I watched in awe as her eyelashes fluttered, a rose colour appearing on her cheeks. My vision was blurred as tears began to stream down my face. I raised a hand to try and wipe the tears away, blushing.

Someone moved beside my bed and I tore my eyes from my baby reluctantly.

"Rikki, she's beautiful!" Cleo whispered quietly, tears sparkling in her eyes. "Does she have a name?"

I looked at Zane who smiled lovingly. Happiness flooded through me as I stared at him. I smiled at Cleo.

"Cariba. Cariba Layla Bennett."

Bella POV

I heard the sound of the front door opening and footsteps on the carpet.

"Bella?"

I groaned, pulling a thread from the cushion I was hugging to my chest.

"In here..."

Caroline strode in, ponytail swinging and a grim look on her face. One by one, the bags dropped from her hands and she grabbed the

ice-cream tub that was placed beside me. She held it up questioningly.

"I saw Will at Truffles today. He was on a date!"

A groan escaped Caroline's lips and she picked up the spoon from the ice-cream. She began eating, scowling at me.

"And she was really cute! With these lace pink sandals..."

Caroline's expression immediately brightened as she dumped down the ice-cream and pulled out a pair of heels from the bag at her feet.

"You like? How about you wear these out tonight with..." She rummaged in the bags and pulled out a blue and white dress. I studied the shoes and dress, then moved my eyes over to the tub of chocolate ice-cream and my slippers.

"Nope."

Caroline paused, frowning, then nodded sympathetically. She hopped onto the couch beside me.

"We can watch Charmed reruns?"

I grinned, taking a huge lump of ice-cream on the spoon, happily.

Will who?

Lewis POV

"Rikki. Long time, no see!" I exclaimed, grinning cheekily at her. Cleo rocked Cariba back and forth gently, giving her a sweet kiss on the forehead. The sight of them put a smile on my face.

"I know! So. Your now a real scientist?"

I laughed lightly, rolling my eyes at Rikki fondly.

"Atmospheric science, yeah."

She grinned, sinking back into her pillow. "Impressive... I always knew you'd make it... Though I didn't want to say so back then!"

We laughed as Cleo nodded at Zane to take Cariba, which he did enthusiastically. I opened my mouth but shut it with a snap. It could wait. Cleo walked over to me, putting her arms round my waist and resting her head on my shoulder. Rikki yawned, happiness written all over her face.

"You should get some rest." Zane said, firmly, watching Rikki protectively.

"Yeah, we should probably get going... Uh..." Cleo dropped her arms to pull out a pen from her bag. She searched in her bag until she found a receipt that was shoved in her purse. She scribbled something on it then held it out to Zane.

"This is our number. So we can meet for coffee sometime... But I know you'll be busy with Cariba..."

Rikki rolled her eyes, the corners of her mouth twisting into a smile.

"We'll call you. Coffee sounds good."

Cleo grinned as Zane took our number.

"Make sure you bring the wedding photos!" Cleo exclaimed as we turned to leave. We heard Rikki snort as we left.

I can't believe I havn't uploaded a chapter in ages! Really sorry, but I hope it was worth the wait. I'll start writing chapter eight immediately and I'm thinking about having it in Emma's POV.

9. Chapter Eight: Nothing is Impossible

Chapter Eight

Nothing is Impossible

Rikki POV

"Welcome home." I whisper more to myself as Cariba lay asleep in my arms. Every muscle in my body ached and all I wanted to do was crawl into bed. I stifled a yawn as Zane and I headed up the marble stairs to Cariba's room. We entered the room and I took a second to admire the sea green paint on the walls.

"It's perfect," I murmured to Zane, heading over to the cot and delicately placing Cariba inside.

She's perfect.

Emma POV

"Okay! We should pick a date."

The door clicked and Amy paused from flicking through pages of wedding dresses.

"Amy?"

I froze and immediately looked busy, studying the wedding magazines. Ash emerged from the hall, shrugging off his jacket. He paused when he saw me.

"Emma."

Amy stood, shoving a magazine in his face eagerly. "Pick a flower."

As Ash frowned thoughtfully, I walked over to the fridge to get a drink.

"Uh, the iris..."

Amy squealed in delight at Ash's answer which, apparently was correct. Ash smiled, looking from Amy to me.

"So, how's the planning going?"

I pull a carton of orange juice from the fridge, smiling slightly and grabbing a glass.

"Good! Uh, so... How was school?"

Ash took a seat beside Amy and raised his eyebrows at the sheets covering the kitchen table.

"At lunch, Johnson came to me again complaining about the change in the schedule-," Ash was cut off as his phone began to ring. He pulled it out of his jean pocket, turning off the rock music that was playing and putting it to his ear.

"Sorry!" Ash mouthed to Amy and I apologetically. "Oh, hey, Sam!" He nodded at Amy secretively. He stood up and made his way to the living room. Taking my drink back to the table, I sat, picking out a random magazine to work through. Amy looked up and smiled, wiggling her eyebrows. "Sam."

"Uh... Sam?"

Amy looked over her shoulder in the direction Ash had left. "Are you free saturday night because..?"

"Because? Wait- You set me up with Sam!" I cried in a whisper, following her gaze to the living room.

Amy laughed lightly at my expression. "No! Ash did!"

I swallowed, my eyes wide. "What! Why?"

Amy pushed her hair behind her ears. "I don't know. Maybe he thought you'd be great together. But I think you and Sam will be perfect, whatever the reason!"

I tried to ignore the suspicious ideas popping into my head, as well as the pain in my chest.

Cleo POV

"It's possible!"

Lewis rubbed his eyes, groaning dramatically.

"Lewis! At least consider the possibility!" I exclaimed, urging him to understand.

"Cleo, you didn't become a mermaid at birth! And even if you did, your not any-"

He saw my icy glare and stopped short. "Look, Cariba isn't a mermaid! We would have found out by now."

I pursed my lips. "But what if she changes at fifteen? Like we

did?"

Lewis pulled the lasagne out of the oven and dropped it down with a bang on the counter before it fell from his grip.

"Impossible."

I ran a hand through my hair, sighing. "Nothing is impossible, Lewis. You should have realised that by now."

Lewis stared at me as I left the kitchen. As I headed up the stairs, the phone began to ring causing me to retrace my steps back down.

"Hello?"

"Hello, is this Cleo Sertori speaking?"

I spun round as an odd smell filled my nose. Black smoke was whirling towards the ceiling.

"Uh... Cleo McCartney actually- Um, sorry, who is this? Uh... We're having a bit of trouble with our dinner?" I peered into the kitchen and winced as the fire alarm rang out.

"It is Dr. Linda Denman speaking."

Dr. Denman! Dun dun DUN!

10. Chapter Nine: The Grandfathers

Chapter Nine:

The Grandfathers

Rikki POV

Just as Cariba's eyelids closed, the phone rang, causing Zane to jump across the room. He snatched the phone and held it to his ear.

"Hello," Zane murmured in a low voice.

I glanced back down at Cariba and was relieved to see her sleeping peacefully.

"Oh, uh, hi." Zane covered the speaker with his hand, staring at me sheepishly.

"Um, it's my dad."

I rolled my head back and groaned, closing my eyes in frustration. Zane put the phone back to his ear.

"Hey. Uh, yes. She's sleeping. What? Oh, no, no, no."

I glared at him, mouthing to 'get rid of him'.

"Dad, I really think it's for the best if you... Just, give us a few

days and let us get used to being parents on our own."

I nodded reassuringly at Zane, holding Cariba closer to me.

"Mm? Yeah. Okay. Bye. Yeah. I know. Bye."

Zane put down the phone and folded his arms. I raised my eyebrows at him.

"Well?"

Zane paused. "Yeah, he's coming over."

I let out a small groan, scowling at him. "Really? Again? Why?"

"I don't get it either." Zane flopped onto the couch and sank low into the cushions. "I mean, he didn't try to be a good father to me and now, as a grandfather, we can't get rid of him!"

The phone rang again before I could reply and Zane leapt over to pick up to grab the phone for the second time. I scowled, grinding my teeth together.

"That better not be him again. If that is him, I'm leaving you."

Zane rolled his eyes and held the phone to his ear, smirking.

"Hello? Oh, Terry, hi!" Zane laughed quietly as he looked at me.

Great. Grandfather number two.

"Yep. Uh, yeah. No, yeah, we know, yeah. Wait- What? No! Uh, I mean, Harrison actually called not too long ago,-"

I rolled my eyes and watched Cariba stretch and squirm then settle back down. I keaned back against the couch and instantly forgot about our overprotecting parents as I studied every detail of her face, overwhelmed by how beautiful Cariba was.

"Yeah, so he's coming over. Well, it might be a bit crowded and Cariba's sleeping so..."

Zane looked around the room. "Well, it isn't that big..." He replied to Terry defensively. "Yeah, uh, okay... Bye. Yeah... I'll... see you soon."

Zane put the phone down, slowly, lips pursed. I shook my head at him.

"Zane Bennett, who would've thought you had a back bone."

Zane laughed, smiling brightly. He sat back down, staring at me fondly.

"You know..." Zane started, frowning slightly. "Apart from the grandparents... Being a parent isn't as hard as-."

As if on cue, the phone rang for what I hoped was the last time. Cariba began to stir, stretching her arms out from the blanket. As expected, she squinted her eyes and opened her mouth to let out a yell. I immediately went into mother mode as Cariba began to cry.

"You jinxed it!" I exclaimed to Zane over the shrieks. Zane froze, the phone held to his ear, face turning white. I rocked Cariba, willing her to sleep and frowned at Zane who hadn't moved.

"Zane, who is it?"

Sorry for any spelling mistakes. I'm completely wrecked. This chapter is just to show how Rikki and Zane are handling being parents. Hope you enjoyed. Please review!

11. Chapter Ten: Realisation

Chapter Ten

Realisation

Will POV

*** Flashback ***

I entered the shop, feeling out of place. I timidly walked over to the glass counters, pretending to admire the sparkling jewellery. I scanned over the necklaces, eyeing the prices and trying to stop myself from running out the door, clutching my wallet defensively.

"Can I help you?"

I looked up, unwillingly. The man behind the till walked over and I could see him look me up and down, already guessing my price range.

"Hey. I'm looking for a valentine's present for my girlfriend. I want something really special... Unique..."

The man, his lips a thin line, glided over to a counter to the write. He unlocked the window and held up a golden heart necklace. I tried not to frown at his idea of unique. Something caught me eye.

"Can I see that?" I pointed to the necklace, watching as the man picked it up grudgingly.

It was a silver necklace with a beautiful crystal dolphin. The crystal dolphin had perfect hints of blue shimmering in the light. It was beautiful.

It was Bella.

"I'll take it!" I nodded, relieved that I had managed to find something that Bella would love.

*** End of Flashback ***

Emma POV

Valentine's day. The day of red roses, cards and chocolate. Well, for those in a relationship. I turned the volume up in the car so that Black Sheep by Metric was thumping so loud I couldn't hear myself think. Perfect. I glanced sideways at Will, who sat perfectly still in the passengers seat, staring out of the window.

"What's up?"

I imagined Will to ignore me or hide his feelings as usual. I definately wasn't expecting what happened next.

"I want her back."

I flicked my head to look at him in surprise before turning my attention back to the road.

"What?" I exclaimed, unsure if I had heard right.

Will still didn't move, his face serious. "Breaking up with Bella was the worst thing I have ever done." Will finally turned to look at me. "And I've done some stupid things. I'm not the smartest."

I chuckled but immediately went back to being serious. "Are you going to do something stupid now?"

Will sat up and pulled his phone out from his pocket.

"No doubt about it."

Happy Valentine's day! The reason why black sheep by metric is mentioned is because I was listening to the song as I wrote this chapter. I don't own it but it's a great song. Hope you all get something special from that special someone! I'm hoping I will!

12. Chapter Eleven: Betrayal

Chapter Eleven

Betrayal

Cleo POV

"Before we start," Denman started, her stare unsettling. "I need to know for sure."

Denman reached her hand over and nudged her glass of water over with a lot of force. It landed on its side, water spraying my hands as well as hitting my lunch.

"Oh! I am so sorry!"

I watched in awe as she began to snatch up her napkins and dab the tablecloth. She, as expected took my own napkins, leaving me with nothing to dry my hands. I smiled innocently at Denman, almost laughing at her expression. She stared at my wet hands then, as if satisfied, acted as if the incident never happened.

"So. What is it that you do?"

I raised an eyebrow at her. "You called me. And I'm pretty positive it wasn't because you were curious about my work."

Dr. Denman sighed, staring down at her untouched food.

"Alright. Cleo, I have questions."

"So do I," I interrupted, trying hard to keep as little emotion visible on my face. "If I answer your questions, I expect you to do something for me."

Denman opened and closed her mouth, debating. She stared at me, smirking as she sipped her drink. "You have a deal."

I leaned back in my seat, satisfied. Denman bit her lip and sighed. "Powers over water?"

I frowned, a little amused. "You don't know what it is I want yet."

Denman was quick to answer, giving me a cold stare. "You, Emma and Rikki were my greatest work. I had questions. Then you made things difficult and the questions had to remain a mystery. That was about... nine years ago. Let's just say, I want these answers. I don't care what stands in my way."

A chill travelled down my spine but I stared back at her.

"Fine with me." I reply smoothly, picking the crust off of my sandwich, a habit I had. "I had the power to... manipulate water. I could mould it into any shape as well as change the amount of water."

Denman rushed to pull her notebook from her bag and reach back in for a pen. I eyed her as she opened it to scribble in.

Sighing, she saw my look. "I can't miss anything. I would have recorded our meeting but you would be convinced I would use it as proof that mermaids exist. I'm sure?"

With a nod, I continue. "There were hand gestures with each power. Mind was a twist of my hand. I could also control wind."

Denman looked up from her notes.

"Uh..." I froze and mentally slapped myself. "We were just getting used to our new powers over weather when you arrived. They were to dangerous to use. That's probably why you never saw us use them." I lied, swallowing a lump in my throat. As Denman went back to writing I closed my eyes.

"Emma..."

Guilt spread through me as I imagined Emma after finding out about me spilling my guts to the enemy. Taking a deep breath, I push the thoughts away.

"Emma could freeze anything containing water. To be honest, I'm not exactly sure if her power grew so she could freeze anything, but I think they did. She had the power to create snow."

"And her hand gesture?" Denman used my own hand gesture as an example.

"Oh, uh, it was a flat palm... Rikki could heat and boil water which then turned into the control over fire, thunder and lightning. Her hand gesture was clenching her hand into a fist."

Denman nodded, jotting down notes at a surprising speed. She looked up and raised an eyebrow.

"So... How did you become mermaids?"

The next few chapter are probably going to be about Cleo and Denman again. What is it Cleo wants that would make her spill everything? Hope you enjoyed! Please review!

13. Chapter Twelve: Liar

Chapter Twelve

Liar

Cleo POV

Images flashed through my mind as I thought of the moonpool. The moonpool was something I couldn't share. The things Denman would do. Even before she found out about the crystals in the rock.

"One day, we, uh... borrowed a zodiac from someone. Can't remember who... And we went too far out to sea," I managed to stutter when all that was running through my mind was "liar!". "Suddenly a huge wave toppled the zodiac over with us in it. My lungs filled up with air immediately. I started to black out but was dragged up from the surface by Emma. She can swim really well. And the next thing we knew... We had tails!"

Denman stopped writing and laughed, her eyebrows raised. She took a sip of her drink, not taking her eyes off of me.

"Really?! Well, that's odd... As you were changed back to being human in a moonpool at Mako Island. Remember? I was there."

My mouth resembled an 'O' as I thought back. I almost laughed at my own stupidity.

"Hm. That is odd. You know. I forget all of the details. So. Yeah. We were changed by... a- a wave."

Denman pressed her lips together and flared her nostrils.

"Okay. I know it doesn't sound... likely. But!? Being turned into a mermaid wasn't likely!"

Denman glared at me.

"Okay! We... were changed at Mako. Next question!?"

Denman added something to her notebook. I felt very self-conscious.

"So, you just jump into the moonpool and then... Tail? I'm guessing it's not that simple."

My heart pounded against my ribcage as I answered. "It's only when you are in the moonpool when the planets are aligned. It only happens once every fifty years."

Feeling happy with the rubbish I was feeding her, I ate a leaf of lettuce from my side salad. My phone rang out playing Colbie Caillat's Bubbly. I reached for it and had a mini heart attack.

Lewis.

"Uh... Will you excuse me?" I got up from my seat and headed outside of the cafe.

"What's up?"

"Hey, Cleo, sorry to interrupt your lunch with Cassie. Do you think you could pick up a bag of dog food and A4 batteries?"

I turned to look over my shoulder at Denman. She was still writing.

"Uh, sure thing! Oh, got to go! Love you!"

Just as my thumb hovered over the end call button, Lewis replied.

"I love you. See you."

Something told me to get my bag and run. That it wasn't late. But I knew it was. I pushed open the door to go back inside and took my seat opposite Denman.

"Sorry."

Denman nodded and leaned back in her chair, arms folded. "Were you, Rikki and Emma the only mermaids?"

I pretended to frown thoughtfully, shaking my head. I thought of Bella and the four other mermaids I had known.

"Nope. Just us."

Hope you enjoyed. I mentioned Bubbly by Colbie Caillat because it seemed like a song she would like. Thanks for the people who commented. It means a lot! Oh! It would be cool to know which characters' POV you enjoy the most!

14. Chapter Thirteen: Guilt

Chapter Thirteen

Guilt

Cleo POV

"Is that it?"

"Cleo." Denman laughed, shaking her head. "I have asked you three questions. And I'm sure that you only answered the first one honestly."

I slumped back in my chair, defeated.

"So. Who was that on the phone?"

I bit my lip, avoiding her gaze but trying to act natural.

"Uh, do you remember Lewis?" I didn't expect an answer as I shuffled in my seat.

Denman nodded slowly, staring at the table thoughtfully.

"Oh! Cleo McCartney. Your married to Lewis."

My stomach did a flip and I nodded, keeping my stare locked to Denman.

"Mm... Lewis... Did he, uh. Did he ever find out more about why you were... the way you were?"

A strangled sound escaped my lips as I dropped my gaze to my plate.

"I mean... I'm sure he completed experiments and tests but... His research. Did he discover anything?" Denman stuttered, making large hand gestures as she tried to explain.

I opened and closed my mouth several times before speaking. "He created a liquid... that... We were able to touch water without our tails appearing."

I resisted a smile as I studied her face, feeling proud of my husbands' achievement. I decided to forget to mention the unfortunate events that happened afterwards. Denman suddenly looked skeptical and I braced myself.

"How do I know you aren't using Lewis' liquid right now?"

"I guess you don't," I replied confidently, taking a sip of my drink. "But... There were some... effects that occurred after using the spray. Like... an allergic skin turned red as if we were sunburned."

Denman added more notes and I felt an urge to sneak a look at what she had written.

"But it worked?"

I nodded, glancing round the cafe awkwardly.

"Cleo. Does Lewis know your having lunch with me?"

I paused and rubbed my face with my hands, ashamed. I shook my head. I couldn't bring myself to look at her so I became very interested in stirring my coffee.

"Cleo. Why did you agree to meet me for lunch?"

Cleo POV

The front door slammed behind me as I walked through the hallway. I kicked off my boots and sighed as my feet sank into the soft white carpet. I dropped all of my bags and slouched into the living room. Fraser ran over from inside the kitchen as I jumped onto the couch where Lewis lay. I rested my head onto his shoulder and sighed in content, closing my eyes. Lewis turned the TV, which was playing one of his documentaries. He turned to look at me.

"How was your day? How was Cassie?"

I scrunched up my nose as if there was a foul smell.

"Yeah, good. Cassie's good."

My stomach churned but fortunately, Lewis smiled and kissed my forehead sweetly. Lewis turned the TV back on and we settled down, Fraser resting on the carpet. I felt my phone vibrate in my pocket. I squirmed and raised my head, grudgingly, to read the text.

To: Cleo Sertori

I will have news soon.

From: Linda Denman

I haven't updated in so long! Hopefully my writers block has passed and I get less homework from my not-so nice teachers. Then I can update more often. Review if you want to! Hope you liked!

15. Chapter Fourteen: Hello?

Chapter Fourteen

Hello?

Emma POV

As Sam studied the menu, I took the chance to look at him fully. Even though the fact that Ash had set us up tugged on my heart strings, I couldn't help but blush when I saw him. His deep, dark blue eyes and short blonde hair. His sweet, innocent grin. And his british accent. I bit my lip, hiding a smile. Ash who? His voice brought me away from my thoughts.

"I think I may try the lamb chops. It all sounds amazing. What about you?"

Sam looked up suddenly and I panicked, pretending to scan the menu intently.

"Mm. I think I'll have... the lasagne."

I laid down the menu awkwardly, nudging my drink in the process.

"So. Ash tells me your a swim coach?"

Sam grinned, raising his eyebrows at me. "And Ash tells me that you swim yourself. And that you are incredible."

I blushed, resting my chin in my hand. I nodded, trying not to look so proud.

"I'm pretty incredible." I joked, running a hand through my hair.

As he laughed, I opened my mouth and something slipped that I wished hadn't.

"Why did Ash set us up?" Ignoring his confused expression, I continued. "Isn't it wierd that he would?"

"Why would it?" Sam asked, brightly.

I shut my mouth with a snap.

"I need to go to the restroom. Excuse me."

I hurried passed as he stood politely. I pushed open the door, pulling out my phone in a swift movement. I dialled, leaning against the sink wearily.

"Emma. How's it going?"

"Ash, please tell me Sam knows we went out."

Rikki POV

I tiptoed down the stairs after placing Cariba in her cot. I pulled my tangled hair out of my face and tied it up. Zane was watching me from the foot of the stairs.

"Denman. I can't believe it. Denman! Why would she call?"

Zane paced back and forth, hands on hips.

"She wanted to meet up with you for lunch."

I laughed with no humour, rubbing my eyes. Over my dead body. My cold laugh trailed off as I thought.

"She probably tried to get in contact with Emma and Cleo."

With an odd look, Zane started searching through pages placed by the phone, fingers moving frantically. He produced a torn piece of paper, grabbing the phone.

I hopped over and looked over his shoulder. After dialling, Zane pressed the phone to my ear.

"Hello?"

"Uh, Cleo? Hey. Um, it's Rikki... Has Linda Denman tried to get in contact with you?"

There was a pause and Zane raised his eyebrows at me, mouthing 'well?' I shrugged just as Cleo answered.

"No. Why?"

I sighed in relief. "Good. She called us. We don't know why but where she goes, trouble follows."

"Yeah, no, she didn't call."

"Good. Oh... Cleo, do you have Emma's number? I'm going to call her too."

There was another pause. "Wait. I do!"

Emma POV

I heard Ash exhale heavily.

"Oh. Well, I guess I never got round to mentioning it..."

"Ash!" I snapped, gripping the sink tightly. "You... 'Never got round to mentioning it'! Oh, so, you expected me to 'mention' it to him during dinner! I only agreed to go out with Sam because he knew! Ash, think about it! My ex setting us up! What do I do?!"

There was a pause as I heard Ash mumble something to someone.

"Amy?! Put Amy on!"

Ash hurried to obey and before I could start yelling again, she spoke.

"Okay. It's fine! What you have to do is just tell him bluntly. I knew Ash and you were together before him and I were. And I was completely okay!"

"Um, but you weren't the one in the awkward position. I was... And now Sam will be!"

My phone flashed, showing another caller.

"Ugh! I've got another call. Bye."

I ended the call with Amy and looked at the caller details to the next. Unknown.

"Hello?"

"Emma! Hey, it's Rikki Chadwick. Uh, has... Linda Denman called you yet?" Rikki exclaimed, sounding out of breath.

I stood still, unsure of what to do.

"Uh. No. Why?"

I took a deep breath and held the button with the speaker picture on it.

"Hi, this is Cleo McCartney?"

Without another word from the crackled voice, the gates automatically began to open. I passed through after thanking the mystery helper. The drive up to the house was a long one and I couldn't help but stare at the huge house. There were patches of grass on either side of the road, neatly cut and with perfectly shaped bushes all around.

I finally made it up to the house and walked up the front steps, legs like jelly. I knocked timidly and stood back, biting my lip nervously. Eventually Zane came to the door, smiling but looking exhausted.

"Hey."

"Hi. Your house is huge!" I exclaimed, walking through into the hallway and turning round in awe.

Zane smiled and led me into the large livingroom where Rikki sat, holding Cariba.

Rikki smiled when she saw me and looked round sheepishly when she saw my stare. "Sorry about the mess..."

Rikki moved a baby bottle from the couch to let me sit. I did, smiling at Cariba as she was passed to Zane. Zane nodded at us politely then left, taking the sleeping baby with him.

"I didn't call Bella. Because of the fact that she didn't know Denman."

I nodded and bit my lip again as there was a knock on the door. Rikki got up with a sigh, running a hand through her hair. Zane came down the stairs, carefully, Cariba in his arms. I awkwardly followed him into the kitchen, knowing it was clear I was avoiding Emma.

"It's Emma!"

Zane looked round at me as I came in and nodded again.

"Uh. I'll get snacks."

I walked on stiff legs over to the cupboard and choose randomly which to open. Inside were cans of soup and different sauces. I closed it and moved onto another to find cereal. Zane, seeing my difficulty, passed Cariba to me and began reaching into a cupboard for bowls.

"This must be awkward for you. How long has it been since you've seen Emma?"

I frowned, pretending to think. "Uhh... I'm not sure. I guess I saw her you know, that night then now."

Zane nodded, with the bowls of food in his arms. He set them down to take Cariba who had began to squirm in my arms.

I looked down at Cariba fearfully. "Hey, why don't you take the

snacks in and I'll put Cariba to bed?"

Zane raised an eyebrow at me, dropping his arms.

"Uh..." I searched my mind for an explanation. "I know, I know. I'm avoiding seeing Emma but..."

After a pause, Zane nodded. I followed him into the hallway and carefully up the stairs to Cariba's room. It was painted a beautiful green with silver furniture. Zane stood by the door.

"This seems weird, but I trust you. You know, she will easilier go back down. She doesn't cry as much as you would imagine. Well, with Rikki. And you now.'

I looked down at her. She stared back with beautiful dark blue eyes. I glanced up to see Zane gone.

"Okay..." I started rocking her back and forth but her eyes never fluttered. Cariba was wide awake and staring at me intently.

I decided to place her in her as soon as I did, Cariba began to fidget again.

"Shh... Now this is only because I love you..." I pulled a plastic sandwich bag out of the back pocket of my jeans.

Inside was a single cotton swab. Looking back at the door carefully, I took it out and reached down into the cot. Cariba continued to stare at me.

It has been so long since I have uploaded a chapter! It should be illegal. But hoped you enjoyed! And please do the usual; review!

17. Chapter Sixteen: Reunion

Chapter Sixteen

Reunion

Emma POV

"I say one of us goes to lunch with her, to find out what her angle is."

Rikki sighed, rubbing her forehead roughly. She reached over to the bowl of Doritos on the coffee table, popping one into her mouth. "I don't think so. I don't want her back in our lives. Especially now I have a baby that could be harmed by her. I mean, we don't know the extent of what she could do. What she would do."

I pursued my lips, trying desperately not to show my disagreement. I nodded but opened my mouth, ready with a reason to convince Rikki that my idea wasn't a complete disaster.

"Actually... I think Emma's right."

I looked up to see Cleo leaning against the doorway, arms folded. All

thoughts of Denman left my mind as I got up from the couch and ran over to Cleo, arms reaching out.

"Cleo!"

Cleo smiled and I pulled her into a hug, laughing happily.

"Oh, my god!" Cleo squealed, pulling away to look at me. "You look great! Did you colour your hair?"

I laughed, raising an eyebrow at her and her pitch black curls. "Well, you obviously did!"

Rikki got up from the couch to walk over to where we stood. We glanced and I bit my lip at her impatient expression.

"Can we please get back to the problem at hand... Please? So, that's two against one meaning, you win. I guess we should decide which one of us should go and have lunch with her."

Cleo folding her arms and blew air from her mouth. "I'll do it."

I raised an eyebrow at her in disbelief. "Alright. Just make sure you don't give her any information that could, you know, endanger us."

Cleo nodded and a song began to play, a tune I recognised as a Colbie Caillat song. Cleo fumbled in her back pocket and pulled out her phone. She stared at the screen.

"Colbie Caillet? Doesn't seem like the music you'd be interested in. Not with your new style and everything." Rikki teased, not sensing the change in atmosphere. Her phone stopped ringing.

"Uh, Cleo... Are you okay?"

Cleo looked up suddenly and stared at me. "Uhh.. yeah? Yeah, hang on. Um, I'm going to call them back... It's my work..."

Rikki nodded and directed Cleo to a room where she could talk privately. When Cleo had left, we both settled back down.

"Do you know what she does for a living?" I asked, reaching for my coffee.

Rikki laughed, taking another dorito. "No, but I know about Lewis. An atmospheric scientist or something like that. Something to do with space. Oh, I heard Ash moved back to the Gold Coast a few years ago. Did you get back together?"

I stopped laughing and grimaced. "No. He was quite set on "wooing" me after he got back. But, no, uh, he's actually engaged to one of my close friends. I'm maid of honour and am also helping her plan the wedding."

Rikki snorted which caused me to let out a giggle myself.

"I'm going to let the moment you said "wooing" pass and move on to this wedding horror!"

I continued to laugh, snacking on the bitesize crackers.

"Are you okay with doing this? That's like me planning the wedding for..." Rikki sighed, smirking. "Oh wait. I married my high school sweetheart. I have no ex's to plan weddings for."

"Lucky you."

Rikki stared at me, grinning oddly. "So. How exactly did Ash "woo" you?"

Cleo POV

"Cleo, I'm ready to start with the tests. All I need is the swob of DNA. Do you have it?"

I clutched my phone to me ear.

"Yes. When do you want it?"

I held my breath as Zane passed the doorway. He peeked his head round and bit his lip, mouthing he was 'sorry'. I smiled and watched Zane leave before continuing my conversation with Denman.

"Bring them to my office as soon as you can. Remember, Cleo, I'm as excited about these results as you are."

I felt sick at the thought. "I need to know. I'm at Rikki's now. I'm planning on sneaking in questions about her pregnancy, to see if there were... irregularities..."

My phone beeped, showing another call waiting as Denman mumbled her agreements with my plan.

"I have another call. Got to go. I'll see what I can find out."

I hung up and answered the call from 'unknown'.

"Hello?"

"Hello, is this Cleo McCartney?"

I frowned. "This is she. How may I help you?"

"This is Dr. Brody. We have received your test results If you would like to schedule an appointment so we can do this face to face?"

Thanks everyone who waited for my next chapter! I was inspired to write after receiving a comment to carry on. To be honest, it seemed like I wouldn't but I'm glad I did as I'm excited about the next chapters!

18. Chapter Seventeen: News

Chapter Seventeen

News

Cleo POV

I handed the sandwich bag to Denman aware of her eyeing the contents. When the bag was inches from her fingertips, I pulled it away, hesitantly. Denman scowled at me.

"Wait. Before I do this," I sighed, dropping my arm. "You have to understand. I'm betraying my friends doing this. And I've come to terms with that but... I can't put Cariba into any harm."

Denman crossed her arms, an icy glare on her face.

"Whatever the results say, you have to swear to me that you won't... put it into your own hands to..."

Denman walked round me to close the door of her lab.

"I'm not going experiment on Rikki's baby."

I frowned uncertainly, but handed the sandwich bag containing Cariba's DNA to her. Denman quickly took it and i stood awkwardly as Denman pulled on her gloves to experiment with the swob.

"I need to get my hands on Rikki's file at the doctor's. It could help with my research."

I nodded solemnly, avoiding Denman's eye as I turned to leave.

"I was quite confused as to why your betraying your friends, as you said. Then I realised why."

I walked out, closing the door behind me before another conversation could start.

Emma POV

The ring caught the light reflecting beautifully onto the wedding magazines that were spread on the coffee table. The diamond was surrounded by small sapphires.

"I can't believe your going through with this!"

Will closed the case and put the engagement ring in his jacket pocket. I turned to Amy accusingly.

"I can't believe you helped him pick out the ring!"

Amy was pulled out of her daydream at my question. No doubt thinking of the perfect wedding.

"Oh, sorry." She said absentmindedly, then laughed. "He was clueless!"

I eyed them, furrowing my eyebrows. "It looks expensive. Didn't you leave you job so you could tranfer to another firm?"

Amy looked up quickly and punched Will in the shoulder. "You didn't tell me you were on a budget!"

Will rolled his eyes at her and rubbed his shoulder. "Calm down, I

got the job."

"You're still an environmental lawyer? Helping the good guys?"

I snorted and Will joined in as Amy frowned, indignantly.

"I'm not congratulating him if he's working for someone killing sea turtles."

When we laughed harder she ignored us and began flicking through pages of wedding dresses. She began mumbling to herself before pausing over a page and freezing.

"Uh, Amy? You okay?"

Amy got up from her position on the rug, shoving a magazine under my nose. Her expression was unreadable. I took the magazine from her hands and studied the picture before me.

The page on the left had columns of writing, with several small pictures to accompany them. The page on the right was a wedding dress. It was strapless, reaching the models ankles. It was beautiful but I hid my expression of pain at the thought of Amy walking down the aisle, Ash waiting with a grin on his face.

"This is it! This is the dress!" Amy cried, pulling Will over from where he was raising an eyebrow at prices for wedding dresses. None of the dresses compared to the one Amy had chosen.

"Oh, Amy, it's perfect!" I mumbled, avoiding her stare.

Will looked at the page then nodded in agreement. He shuffled back to his spot and pulled out the engagement ring again. I frowned at him as Amy stared at the dress.

"Will, are you sure you want to do this? I mean, you said it yourself! It's awkward between you and Bella."

Will looked up at me and smiled knowingly. "Yeah, but if I propose, we'll go back to how we were before."

I put my head in my hands. "Will, I just think you're handling the breakup... Well, you're not handling it well. Just try and think about this."

Will dropped his head and ran a hand through his hair.

"No." Will looked up at me and smiled. "She's the one."

I thought of Ash and nodded, saying no more.

Cleo POV

I walked into the kitchen after my trip to Dr. Denman's lab and the doctor's after my appointment with Dr. Brody. Fraser ran over to meet me by the fridge.

"Cleo?"

I heard Lewis call from the study and went to meet him. He was

sitting at the desk, studying several pages of notes. He turned in the swivel chair to look at me anxiously.

"I went to see Dr. Brody. She gave me good news." I smiled, walking over to him.

"Good news?" Lewis asked, standing up to pull me into a hug. I nodded in his arms.

"There are no problems."

Dr. Denman POV

"Dr. Denman?"

I looked up and nodded at Dr. Wright to come in. He closed the door behind him which made me raise an eyebrow at him. He was holding a few sheets in his hands.

"Are they the tests results? That was quite quick." I stood up and went round my desk. "Are you sure you were thorough?"

Dr. Wright bit his lip. "These aren't the tests for Cariba Bennett. They are the results from the sample of saliva you managed to get from Cleo McCartney, when you went to lunch."

I reached for the sheets eagerly. I read a few lines and looked up in disbelief.

I wrote this chapter after I uploaded the one before but I may not be able to upload this one so soon since I'm going camping. Thanks for reading, hope you enjoyed.

19. Chapter Eighteen: 4 Years Earlier

Chapter Eighteen

4 Years Earlier

*** Flashback***

Bella POV

I opened the dorm door to find Caroline sitting at her desk with several books open. Rikki was sitting on my beanbag chair, enjoying a bowl of popcorn and looking very relaxed. I dumped my bag on my bed and pulled out my chair to sit and study.

"Not you too! What happened to 'school being the best years of our lives'?" Rikki exclaimed, throwing popcorn at my head.

Caroline looked up and laughed. "You obviously don't have Professor Monty. The urge to please him is too much!"

Rikki rolled her eyes and blew air from her mouth. She shuffled off of the beanbag and climbed up the ladder to her top bunk.

"I'm bored." Rikki complained, pulling up her socks. "Entertain me."

I pulled out my notebook and pen, ready to begin.

"Are you meeting Zane on Saturday?" I asked, pulling out my notes.

Caroline rolled over in her swivel chair and pulled a ruler from my pencil case.

"Yeah," Rikki groaned, swinging her legs over the side of the bed.

Caroline returned to where she was working. "Something going on with you two?"

I turned to see Rikki scratch her head. "We've just grown apart. I keep feeling like we'll break up soon but we never do. Ugh. So... How's the spark with you and Will?"

"Burning." I frowned. "Sorry."

Rikki waved her hand, rolling her eyes.

"Why aren't you working?"

Rikki made a face, jumping down to get her popcorn. "I'm taking a break."

Caroline grinned and sighed. "I'm going to get a drink. You want anything?"

Rikki and I both shook our heads and Caroline left without another word.

"So, you said your dad's visiting? Are you going to see him on Saturday?"

I began jotting down notes, shaking my head.

"So, you're free? After I meet with Zane, I'm going to meet Emma, and possibly Cleo, for coffee. You want to come? Cleo's been super stressed lately and it's the only day she has free."

I walked over to the mirror and pulled my hair back into a ponytail. "Yeah, sure. Haven't seen them in a while." I turned to face her.

"Uh..."

Rikki raised her eyebrow at me, offering me the bowl of popcorn.

"No, thanks... Look, I need to tell you all something. But, you know, I'm probably over reacting."

I put my hands on my hips and grimaced. "I'm meeting my dad on monday, next week. I haven't seen him in a long time and we're really close. The only problem is...Our secret. It's sort of... causing problems."

Rikki pursed her lips and sat back down on the bean bag where she had been when I arrived.

"Like, we always used to have this holiday... Mum and Dad work abroad so them coming home each time was huge for me. My dad arranged for us to go back to the Gold Coast for a week. During half-term."

Rikki shrugged, seeming uninterested. "I don't see the problem?"

I sighed. "He's arranged all these water activities. Even swimming with dolphins! Which doesn't seem like much to us, but to him it is. It's his first time there because he was working away and I stayed with my Aunt, so he's really excited."

Rikki narrowed her eyes and popped a piece of popcorn in her mouth. "I fear where you're going. How about you just... Tell him you're sick."

"When I meet my dad next week, I'm going to tell him I'm a mermaid."

Rikki scowled, eyes wide. "Are you insane?!"

I rolled my eyes and sat down, pulling my book towards me. Rikki spun my chair round and stared at me. "You can't do this!"

I glared at her and folded my arms. "He's my dad! What's he going to do?!"

Rikki put her head in her hands and groaned. "Expose you, hand you over to some lab, run tests!"

I glared at my books and rubbed my head as I felt my head throb.

"I told Will. I don't see any difference."

I watched Rikki walk over to her bowl and grab a handful before aiming it at my head.

"Would you stop?!"

"Would you stop!?" Rikki snapped back. "Will was close to finding out about us. He suspected something was up. Your dad has no idea and will have no idea unless you ignore me and tell him."

I opened my mouth to argue as Caroline walked in. She paused at the sight of us glaring at each other.

"Man, I was gone for, what? Five minutes?"

*** End of Flashback ***

Bella POV

The bell rang out as I pushed open the door to Truffles. I paused to scan the room before manouvering passed tables and dumping my bag on a spare one. I sat down, pulling out a pocket mirror from my handbag and started reapplying my lipgloss. I glanced up as the bell rang from the front door and Emma entered, looking round anxiously. I waved as she spotted me and rose from my chair, slipping my lipgloss back into

my bag.

"Hey."

Emma gave me a hug and sat opposite me, pulling a menu towards her. "Rikki said she was sorry she couldn't come. She just had her baby and I don't think she's ready to leave her yet, which is understandable."

I nodded, raising my eyebrows. "Yeah, she had her baby. Did they decide on a name?"

Emma smile, reading the menu. "Yeah, a lovely name. Cariba. Rikkj chose it."

I leaned over the table to take my own menu, even though I didn't need to look at it to place my order. "You've stayed in contact with her?"

"Not really." Emma smiled as Joan, the waitress came over to take our order. "Hi, can I have the chocolate chip cheese cake? And a latte, please."

Joan nodded and grinned at me, writing in her pad. "Bella, I haven't seen you in here for a while! The usual?"

"Yes, thanks."

Joan collected the menus and left leaving Emma and I alone.

I pursed my lips, pushing my bag onto the floor by my feet to clear the table. "I was kind of wondering if Rikki cancelled because she didn't want to come. I guess, she has every right."

Emma frowned, "She didn't want to bring Cariba. Incase she was fussing and everything..."

I fiddled with my hair and looked around. "So, how have you been?"

"Good, yeah, good."

My phone rang out and I reached down to get it from my bag. I saw the caller before hanging up, apologizing to Emma. I put my phone on the table and sighed, staring at the ground.

"Rikki called me saying she had to talk? Do you have something to tell me?"

Emma bit her lip and fixed her jacket. "Yes, actually. Cleo, Rikki and I met up a few days ago. The reason was because Rikki and I both got a call from Dr. Denman."

I frowned. "Am I meant to know that name?"

Emma shook her head. "She was just someone who gave us a hard time as, um, mermaids. But... the thing is. I'm here for a completely different reason. Which you can never say I told you."

I made a face. "Sure?"

Emma fiddled with her bracelet. "It's about Will. He's going to propose to you."

Rikki POV

I rocked Cariba, holding the phone to my ear with my shoulder.

"Yeah, she's fine. My dad's over now so he's helping clean up."

I turned to see Zane come in from his shower. He gently took her from me, grinning.

"So, Emma's with Bella? I'm sorry I couldn't go." Cleo replied as I followed Zane out of the baby room.

"Yeah, it would have been weird if I went."

We walked down the stairs and met Dad in the kitchen where he was making noodles.

"Maybe at first. But I think, once it all blows over, we can all be friends."

I rolled my eyes, smirking. "You're so naive."

I watched as Zane and Dad began muttering to each other. Zane passed Cariba to him and he left the room, not before I gave Cariba a kiss. Dad kissed me on my forehead.

"I'm positive." Cleo laughed, sounding cheerful.

Zane began pulling bowls from the cupboards and I left, glancing back at him. I made my way up the stairs and into Zane's study, out of earshot.

"So is Zane."

"What?" Cleo asked, sounding confused from the other end of the line.

"He is handling parenthood way to well!" I muttered, shutting the door.

"I'm sorry?" Cleo laughed as I took a seat.

"I'm a mess. I need to sleep and shower. I'm stressed. I feel as if I'm going grey by the second. And then I see Mr. Perfect Father. He's acting like this is all easy."

I heard Cleo make a sound of understanding. "Enjoy it while it lasts though."

I nodded and glanced at the framed picture on the desk. It was of Zane with his arm around me. My blue crystal necklace stood out.

"Cleo, can I call you back? I'm going to call Bella."

Thanks everyone for reading and inspiring me to write. Hope you enjoyed! Please review :-) Oh btw, there are going to be more flashbacks to explain everything :-D

20. Chapter Nineteen: Agreement and Disagree

Chapter Nineteen

Agreement and Disagreement

4 Years Earlier

Rikki POV

I walked into our dorm, swinging my bag onto the top bunk. I rolled my eyes as I saw Caroline was on the bottom bunk, revising. Bella was curling her hair in front of the mirror.

"You ready to go?" Bella turned to look at me.

I nodded and went over to my chest of drawers, pulling out denim jean shorts.

"Let me get changed first," I replied, choosing a top to go with my shorts.

Bella sighed, unplugging her curling iron and grabbing her makeup bag. "That's not 'ready to go'."

I started getting changed out of the clothes I'd worn to class. I glared at Bella frostily. "Aren't I the one who's meant to be mad at you?"

Caroline and Bella laughed as I pulled on my top.

"You can't stay mad at me for long. I bought you the foundation you're wearing right now." Bella grinned, fixing her hair.

I joined in with the laughter.

"Yes and now I love you forever." I shot back sarcastically.

I finished getting dressed and started touching up on my makeup.

"I think I'm going to end it with Zane."

Bella's hand wavered as she put on lipgloss. Caroline raised her head from her books and her mouth formed a perfect 'o'.

"Oh, my god!" Caroline got up from her bed as I turned slowly.

"You can't just spring that on someone doing their makeup!" Bella protested, wiping lipgloss from her chin.

I laughed lightly and Caroline grabbed me by the shoulders.

"Are you serious!?"

I nodded and grabbed a blusher brush after Caroline released me.

"I've only ever been with Zane. Unless you count the time I went to a beach party with Will." I teased but Bella ignored it.

"I thought things were finally getting serious?"

I nodded, putting down my makeup and walking passed both Bella and Caroline who were crowding round me. "Exactly. I'm at college. I'm not ready for a serious relationship. And it's Zane. Do you see him as the father figure? And I'm not going to end up with my first love, come on."

Caroline and Bella gave each other a look causing me to laugh out loud.

"You seem surprisingly... okay... with this." Caroline said, delicately.

"I guess I am. I mean, I'm 21! I have my whole life ahead of me! Maybe I want to travel or something!"

Bella stared at me.

"Come on." I told Bella as I reached for my bag and threw it over my shoulder. "Let's go."

Cleo POV

I watched the band set up and took a sip of my drink.

"Bella should preform here." I glanced at Emma who was watching the drummer set up the microphone. "I mean, I know Nate's gone and Lewis doesn't have time but she could be a solo artist."

Emma laughed, taking a nacho from the bowl on the table. Ash came back from the till with our drinks. He set them down in front of us and took a seat beside Emma, putting his arm around her. Emma's phone vibrated on the table and she reached to get it.

"It's from Rikki." Emma read the text quickly then put her phone down to take a drink. "Bella's parking the car."

I twirled my well-needed straw round the drink in my glass. Ash looked over at me.

"So, Emma tells me your studying oceanography?"

I smiled, nodding. "It's tough but I'm so passionate about the subject. Lewis goes to the same uni as me. He's in a different course. Atmospheric science."

Emma grinned. "I'm not going to lie, because I was going to a different university than you and Rikki and Bella, I was worried. I mean, sharing a dorm with complete strangers! Of course, it took a little convincing from Zane's wallet so Rikki and Bella could share a dorm."

Ash looked between us. "What?"

Emma rolled her eyes, smirking. "His dad went down to complain. He didn't actually pay."

Ash stared, amazed. "Wow."

I glimpsed Bella from between a crowd of people. I stood and waved them over. They came over and sat, Rikki taking a nacho, greedily.

"Hey, guys. Ash, hey, I haven't seen you in a while." Bella smiled, pulling out her purse. "I'm going to get a drink. Rikki, you want anything?"

Rikki widened her eyes. "I'll come with you."

I watched them leave but looked away as someone spoke into the mic.

"Hello, everyone and welcome to Linda's! First off preforming will be 'The Alarm'!"

We clapped as the man left the stage and the music started. I checked my phone to see a text from Lewis about our date on Tuesday. Smiling, I texted back confirming. I sent him the message and slipped my phone into my pocket. I looked up to see Ash and Emma kissing and I made a face, laughing. They parted and looked at me curiously.

"Public place, here." Rikki teased, arriving back with their drinks.

Bella arrived with more nachos and we all sat.

"So... I have news." Bella mumbled, looking round.

All eyes on Bella, she swallowed. "... Rikki's going to break-up with Zane."

Rikki scowled as the entire table arupted.

"Wait, what?"

"Oh, Rikki, what happened?"

"Really? Why?" Ash asked and we all stared at Rikki who was bright red and grinding her teeth.

"That wasn't the news I had in mind, Bella."

I turned to Bella then Rikki. "So you're not breaking up with him?"

Bella sighed, resting her chin in her hand. "No, she is. But that's not what I needed to say?"

I frowned, curious. "So?"

Bella glanced at Rikki briefly, playing with her hair. "My dad's meeting me for dinner next week. I'm planning on telling him I'm a mermaid."

I looked around the room to see if anyone was listening before speaking, breaking the silence.

"You can't, Bella!" I whispered, looking round at the others.

"That's what I said." Rikki added, sipping her drink.

Emma shook her head like she was in a daze. "Okay, let's think this through."

Bella smiled slightly while Rikki rolled her eyes.

"Let's think about all the people we've told."

Rikki raised her head at that, interested.

"Okay." I thought about our first year as a mermaid. "Lewis. We didn't mean for him to find out but it was good he did."

"Yeah, until his experiments..." Rikki muttered which caused me to bite my tongue from snapping at her.

"Denman. Bad. Very." Emma frowned, and she, Rikki and I all shared a knowing look.

"Zane." Rikki said and we all stared at her awkwardly. "That was good and bad. Good most of the time though."

There was a slight pause as we all thought.

"Ms. Chatam, sort of." I mentioned, raising an eyebrow at Emma. "That was good. She warned us about the full moon."

Rikki nodded and then unexpectedly, Emma and Rikki looked at me, anxiously.

"Charlotte." I furrowed my eyebrows at the memory. "Bad. So bad."

Ash coughed and grimaced. "Me."

Emma smiled and hugged him. "Good."

Bella spoke for the first time in a while, as she hadn't known any of the people we'd listed. "Me as well, I guess. That was good. I'm hoping."

We all smiled and narrowed our eyes, thinking furiously.

"Will." Bella shrugged. "That was bad at first. But good now..."

We all looked at each other expectantly.

"Did anyone count?" Rikki asked, hopefully.

Bella nodded. "Yeah. I did. Six good, two bad."

Emma nodded but she didn't seem sure. "Four? Yeah, four of the people we told were boyfriends and the other two were mermaids. Denman was a scientist, of course her knowing was bad for us. And Charlotte was a sly, coniving toad."

I nodded, smirking.

"Okay, Bella." Emma confirmed. "You can tell your dad. I mean, I don't think I'm ever going to tell my parents. But I think they'd understand, if I did."

Rikki groaned, smacking her forehead with her hand. "Okay, remember how Ryan and Sophie were pretty close to finding out? That would have been bad!"

Bella glared at Rikki. "Again, Ryan was a scientist guy,-"

"No, he was a-," I tried to correct her.

"And Sophie was, no doubt, a sly, coniving toad as well."

We all stayed perfectly still, looking at Rikki. She glared round at all of us and without warning, pulled out her purse. She counted her money and set it down on the table, rising from her seat.

"I don't want to see you make this mistake." Rikki snapped at Bella who was frozen as Rikki stormed off. I watched her leave Linda's, a bad feeling rising in me.

Hey, hope you liked this flashback chapter! Please review. Say if you like the flashbacks or not... Maybe I'll do a prequel of them in college :-)

21. Chapter Twenty: Spilled Beans

Chapter Twenty

Spilled Beans

Bella POV

I stared at Emma, mouth hanging open, trying to rearrange my thoughts.

"Oh, my god."

Emma grimaced, looking down at the table. "I know it's an awful thing to do. To tell you, but..."

I opened and closed my mouth several times before speaking. "Look, Emma, I can't,-"

"Bella?"

I frowned, twisting round in my chair. My jaw dropped and I was pulled out of my daze.

"Jason!" I turned to Emma, giving her a wide-eyed, meaningful look as I stood. "Jason, hey! This is Emma."

Emma rose from her seat and shook his extended hand. Emma looked confused, looking from Jason to me.

"I didn't expect to see you here. I'm just here getting a takeaway coffee." Jason grinned at me but I failed to return his smile. "Your Emma? Bella's friend from way back? Your an orthodontist, right?"

"Oh, I'm sorry," Emma started and I cringed. "But... um... and you are...?"

Jason raised his eyebrows and looked at me oddly. "Oh, right, I'm Bella's boyfriend."

"Well, you better be off!" I exclaimed, pushing Jason away, not able to look at Emma.

"Yeah, see you." Jason laughed, nodding politely at Emma.

Emma turned her head to watch him leave as I sank into my chair. I waited patiently for her to sit before I spoke.

"We met a few weeks ago." I tried to explain to Emma, who had a painful expression on her face.

"Oh."

We sat in silence for some time before being broken by Joan, who was waddling over with our tray.

"One latte and chocolate muffin for you..." Joan called out, setting down my order gently. "And... another latte and a slice of chocolate chip cheesecake. Will that be all?"

I nodded. "Thank you."

I stared into my cup of coffee, wanting to be anywhere but here.

"Well..." Emma sighed, cutting a bite off of her cheesecake with her fork. "I'm not exactly sure what to do now."

I pursed my lips. "What were you planning on doing?"

Emma swallowed, making a face. "I was planning on telling you not to break his heart. But... he'll be crushed now."

I raised my head, wrapping my hands around my coffee cup, enjoying the warmth. "How do you know I won't say yes?"

Emma laughed without humour and turned to glance at Jason, who was just leaving. I waved goodbye to him as he left.

"We've only been going out for a few weeks! We're exclusive."

Emma narrowed her eyes, drinking some coffee. "Are you going to say yes? I mean, do you still love him?"

4 Years Earlier

Bella POV

"How's your pasta?"

I nodded, swallowing my bite. "It's very good."

My dad stared at me from across the table. "So, how have you been Bella? Are you still with Will?"

"Mm, Will and I are still together... Um... College has been great! I'm sharing a dorm with Rikki. You remember me talking about her?"

Dad sighed, thinking as he ate. "Yes, Rikki and Cleo, was it?"

I nod, not helping but thinking about Rikki and if she was right. "Yeah. We're also sharing with a girl Caroline. She's studying to be a pharmacist."

My dad nodded, seeming interested. "And Rikki? What's she set on being."

"She's studying marine archeology. Well, when she actually studies, that is."

Dad's expression stayed stony and I wiped my fingers on my napkin.

"Dad, are you alright? What's going on?"

"I lost my job a few weeks ago." My dad answered, sighing loudly.

I reached my arm across the table to take hand. "Oh, dad, I'm sorry."

He nodded and squeezed his eyes shut. "So, we've been having money problems. Your mother has been working double shifts to help but..."

I thought furiously. "I'll get a job! Cleo mentioned to me about a job as the entertainment at a local cafe. It might help." I looked at the empty plates on our table. "This is on me."

He shook his head, sadly. "Oh, honey. That's very kind of you, darling."

I nodded, secretly debating whether to tell him as I raised my hand for a waiter to bring us our check.

"Dad, we have to talk. But not here." I explained, dropping my arm. "It's about our family trip."

"I don't know if we'll be able to go this year." Dad rubbed his mouth with his napkin, staring down at his knees.

"Oh." I paused. "Well..."

Rikki POV

"Yep, she's probably spilling our secret as we speak."

I could almost feel Cleo rolling her eyes at my from the other end of the line.

"Admit you overreacted."

I laughed, rolling my own eyes. "Oh, never."

I was sprawled out on my bed, flicking absentmindedly through a magazine with Cleo on the phone, chirping away.

"She texted me before she met her dad. She was debating whether to tell him." Cleo stated and I raised my head.

"Oh?" I swept my magazine off my bed and it fell to the floor. I shifted round so I was on my back, staring at the ceiling. "Do you think she will?"

I waited for Cleo to answer. "I think a quarter of her wants to tell him, another quarter is doubtful. And half of her wants to tell him just to prove you wrong."

I grimaced, rubbing my head. "Not looking good then."

"Yeah," Cleo replied. "Where's your other roommate?"

I slid off my bed and slipped on my shoes so I could go to the vending machine downstairs. "Out with her girlfriend. Good for her to be in a relationship where one of them doesn't only think about money and power."

"Oh, Zane troubles?"

I laughed opening my dorm door and locking it behind me. "You caught that, did you?"

I shuffled down the hall in my shoes that I hadn't put on properly. "All Zane cares about is money and work. I realised that a long time ago, remember? And I haven't seen him in weeks." I complained, walking down the stairs carefully. "I can't even find the right time to dump him because he keeps cancelling on me."

I finally arrived at the vending machine and fishing in my pockets, pulled out my change. I shoved the money into the slot and pressed the button, watched the chocolate bar fall.

"Cleo, you still here?" I asked, bending down to retrieve my snack.

"Yeah... I have three missed calls from Bella..." Cleo answered, her voice quiet.

"What?" I looked at my phone and saw a message from Bella. "I got a text from her... Oh, great. She wants me to pick her up."

I pulled myself up the stairs. "I was obviously a last result. Probably too nervous to call me."

Cleo sighed heavily. "This is ridiculous."

I unlocked my dorm door and immediately grabbed my bag. "Cleo, I'm going to go pick her up. I'll call you later?"

After exchanging goodbyes, I hung up and flew down the many stairs until the groundfloor. I pushed open the glass doors and ran to my car, aware of the time and the fact I was in stretch pants.

Rikki POV

I pulled up my car at the kerb, waving to Bella. She scrambled inside, shivering with tears streaming down her face.

"Are you okay?" I exclaimed, uncomfortable around people crying.

Bella shook her head, rubbing her hands together to warm up.

"I thought your dad was dropping you home?" I asked, as the car began to move.

"Dad left!" Bella spluttered and I looked at her in panic.

"Oh no. Please, no." I mumbled, looking through the side view mirror. "Your dad didn't leave because he freaked out about the mermaid thing?"

Bella sobbed, closing her eyes and letting the tears fall. I stopped myself from cursing and tried to calm myself.

"Okay, Bella, what happened?"

She took a deep, shaky breath and I waited. "I told him. At first he... he didn't believe me. B-but then I showed him. We went to his hotel where he's staying... Rikki, he totally flipped! He- he told me to get out! That I wasn't his daughter,-" Bella choked up and I looked at her sadly. "Rikki, you were right. I didn't think he'd react how he did."

I hit my fist against the steering wheel, making her jump. "Okay, calm down, we can fix this."

I gave her my phone. "Call Emma, Cleo and Lewis. Tell them to meet at uh... What's that bar called? Ranger? Is it? Okay, tell them to meet us there."

Bella used my phone with shaking fingers to call everyone while I tried to figure out a plan.

This definitely wasn't one of my best chapters but it accidentally got deleted and I had to rewrite it. I'm sorry it's really rushed. Thanks to everyone who had read and waited for me to upload new chapters :-)
I really appreciate it!

22. Chapter Twenty-One: Broken Trust

Chapter Twenty-One

Broken Trust

4 Years Earlier

Dr. Denman POV

"I'm glad you agreed to have dinner with me, Ryan."

Ryan Hartley sat opposite me, looking very paranoid and as though he hadn't slept in days. He nodded, eyeing me.

"This means money, right?"

I smirked, putting down my menu and staring at him. "Oh, yes. If you're correct, this means big things. Lots of money."

Ryan looked down and I bit my lip. "So. Let's get right down to business. If you are able to get your hands on a few necessities, we can go ahead with the research."

My eyes gleamed but he looked unsure. "Necessities?"

I nodded, picking up my menu to scan it briefly. "I'll need a sample of your daughters DNA. And photographic proof."

Ryan looked down, defeated. I smiled and froze, thinking. "Does your daughter have friends called Cleo Sertori, Rikki Chadwick and Emma Gilbert?"

"Uh... Rikki..." Ryan mumbled. "Yes, Bella mentioned a Rikki over dinner."

I grinned, sipping my water. "What a coincidence."

Ryan looked as though he would crumble at any second. "Please, I need the money."

By betraying your own daughter, I thought harshly but didn't dare say.

"Ah, let's say, we split 80, 20?"

Ryan scowled, clenching his fist. "That's insane! You wouldn't be getting any money if it weren't for me!"

"And you wouldn't be getting any money if it weren't for me!" I shot back, glaring at him. "Who else believed your story? And besides, I need the money for the lab."

Ryan winced. "Are you going to... kill her?"

I narrowed my eyes as a phone rang. Ryan paused and fumbled in his coat. He pulled out his phone and immediately dropped it on the table, like it was diseased. It continued to ring as I raised an eyebrow at him.

"Oh, god, it's her."

I smiled, picking up the phone and handing it to Ryan. "Answer it. Quickly, say you're sorry you overreacted and arrange to meet her. Act normal!"

Seeing his displeasure, I answered the phone and shoved it to his ear.

"Hello?"

"Uh... Bella... h- um, hey." Ryan stuttered and I rolled my eyes.

I froze in a desperate attempt to hear Bella's side of the conversation.

"Yeah, i know. I'm- I'm so sorry about, um." Ryan looked up at me. "I overreacted. I want to meet up soon."

I frowned, shaking my head and choosing a meal.

"Yes... that... that would work... Okay..." I raised my head. "I'll see you then..."

Ryan hung up and slowly put down his phone.

I smiled. "Now, let's discuss what you're going to do."

Cleo POV

"Did you want us to bring binoculars too?"

Rikki rolled her eyes at Lewis and she craned her neck to see over the bush in front of us. Lewis, Rikki and I were seated on a park bench at the park where Bella was meeting her dad. Rikki insisted that she should come along to supervise so we were sitting watching. Lewis stood suddenly and I looked up. Bella was leaning against a tree looking very anxious as a man came up to her.

"Is that him?" Lewis whispered, ducking down.

We watched them for sometime, jumping as Emma arrived.

"Is this really necessary?" Emma murmured, crouching down low.

"Nope," I replied, chuckling as Rikki stepped on Lewis' foot.

"Ow! Rikki, move- Hey! What's she doing?" Lewis exclaimed, shuffling round.

Rikki sighed. "She's giving us away. She obviously thinks her dad is cool with it now."

Bella was walking towards us quickly, smiling.

I frowned, standing up. "And you don't?"

We all looked at Rikki as she shook her head. Bella came up to us laughing and everyone rose awkwardly, aware of her dad watching.

"You can go now, for sure! We're going to his hotel again so I can explain everything, in private." Bella said, very quickly and turned to go. Rikki reached out her hand and pulled her back.

"Bella, I don't trust this guy."

Bella scowled, pulling away. "Rikki, stop! I'm getting tired of

this!"

Rikki throw back her head and laughed, looking at each of us. "You've got to be kidding me! I told you not to tell him! And you did! Look how that turned out."

Rikki regained herself and looked Bella straight in the eye. "Please, Bella. Please."

Bella looked round and then back at her dad. She shook her head at us apologetically and took off. Rikki glared at her. "Bella, if I'm right. That's it. Okay? That's it."

Bella didn't stop walking like Rikki and I both wanted. She skipped over to her dad merrily. I bowed my head and Emma blew air out of her mouth.

"How many times have I had to warn her about spilling this secret. She can't keep it. She doesn't deserve to be a mermaid."

Rikki stormed off leaving Lewis looking uncomfortable and Emma and I sharing an expression of pain.

"This is one of the worst fights they've ever had." I mumbled as Emma put her arm around me.

Ryan POV

"So, you turn just by water?"

Bella shook her head, sitting on the chair by the desk. "Juice, hot chocolate and even moisturizer!"

I nodded, trying to act natural. "So, you want a drink?"

Bella nodded and I made my way to the mini fridge by the TV and pulled out a can of soda. I pulled out a glass and poured a small amount of the can into it. I handed it to her and set the can down beside her.

"Oh, um, can I have a straw? For, you know..."

I grimaced and searched in the fridge. "Oh, sorry,-"

"Here." I said, taking one from the collection of things for tea and coffee.

She sipped her drink and I pursed my lips.

"So, what else do you want to know!" She inquired, putting down the glass.

"Oh, um... How- how long have you been a... mermaid?"

Bella looked guilty and picked up her can to pour more into her glass.

She didn't realise that after the can was taken out, it warmed up from the heating which was turned up. The water vapour began to melt, leaving it moist. Bella picked up the can and gasped, letting it slip

from her fingers.

"Oh, oh! A towel, quick!"

I pretended to be confused, wasting seconds before running to the cupboard and searching for a towel. I pulled one out just as Bella turned before my eyes and the hidden video camera installed in the corner.

Present Time

Cleo POV

I was recording my data for work onto both my notebook and laptop as the doorbell rang. I frowned, trying not to lose my place. Sighing heavily, I got up and skipped down the stairs, meeting Fraser at the bottom. I walked over to the door and looked through the peep hole. I groaned inwardly and opened the door, grinding my teeth.

"Hello." I said, unhappiness clear in my voice. I stood blocking her entrance.

"Cleo, is Lewis home?" Dr. Denman replied, carrying a folder and her briefcase.

I shook my head and she continued. "Then I think you should let me in. I have news."

I raised my eyebrows in surprise, standing back so she could come inside. "About Cariba?"

She shook her head and moved into the livingroom, taking a seat. I sat opposite the room on the couch with Fraser sitting upright by my feet, sensing my discomfort.

Dr. Denman placed a folder on the coffee table and I reached for it. Inside were tables filled with numbers and charts. I looked at Denman.

"When we had lunch, I used a sample of your DNA from your cup of coffee to run tests."

I stared at her, mouth open. "I'd proven to you that I wasn't a mermaid anymore."

Denman nodded and pointed to the kitchen. "May I have a drink?"

I nodded and got up reluctantly, thinking of my work upstairs.

"Can we make this quick? I have work to do." I called from the kitchen as I poured a drink into a cup.

"Plus," I said, coming out. "Lewis will be home soon."

Dr. Denman thanked me and nodded at the folder. "Those are your results."

I sighed, taking a seat back down

"I noticed something irregular." Denman explained.

I frowned, stroking Fraser absentmindedly.

"It seems, according to my tests," Denman continued, dragging it out.
"You're pregnant."

Finally! I've been waiting so long to write this chapter. The flashbacks are nearly over but again I may write a prequel. Please do the usual, review. Thanks!

23. Chapter Twenty-Two: Once in a Blue Moon

Chapter Twenty-Two

Once in a Blue Moon

4 Years Earlier

69 Hours Earlier

Cleo POV

I attempted to wipe away the tears falling, reaching for Emma's hand. She smiled at me but her own eyes were glistening with tears threatening to fall. I saw her glance round to the side and I followed her gaze. Rikki's expression was unreadable but as I moved closer to take her hand, the corners of her mouth turned up in a smile.

"Does anyone want to say anything?"

Emma's voice startled us all as no one had spoken for hours. I knew that if I opened my mouth to reply, a sob would escape my lips, so I just shook my head. Emma looked round but Rikki just continued to glare at the rocks of the moonpool and Bella, who hadn't moved since our arrival, let a tear slid down her face.

I froze as the moon began to shine through the crater and onto the water below. Immediately, bubbles began to rise into the air and we all stood mesmerized, Emma giving my hand a squeeze. Without warning, Bella dived into the water, gracefully. I was secretly grateful there wasn't the moment when we stood staring at each other, wondering who would go first. Bella emerged, swishing her arms through the water and staring at the moon. Emma dropped my hand and smiled reassuringly, before following Bella. She copied Bella, craning her neck to see the moon.

Rikki and I both looked at each other, knowing we had to be quick. Bella and Emma swam back to allow Rikki room to dive. I watched her, a sinking feeling in my stomach.

I'm the last to go and as I do, I'm thinking of nothing but swimming in my mermaid form.

68 Hours Earlier

Emma POV

I jumped out of my car and after a quick scan, spotted Cleo standing

outside Bradley's. She was staring intensely at her phone as I ran over to her. She pulled me into a well-needed hug.

"Hey! Bella's inside setting up,-" Cleo's phone, which was still in her hand, vibrated. One glance at the screen and her face dropped. She handed me her phone with a sigh.

"Rikki and I are text-fighting." Cleo explained and I scrolled through the messages.

"We were doing the same last night." I replied, giving Cleo's phone back and following her inside.

"She's mad at us now for 'taking Bella's side'."

I rolled my eyes and headed over to the counter, turning to Cleo. "Do you want a cappuccino? It's on me."

Cleo nodded, smiling. "Yeah, thanks." She look around the cafe. "I'll get us a table and look for Bella."

I turned and read the board briefly, the man behind the till nodding at me for my order. "Can I have a cappuccino and a latte, please?"

I felt my phone vibrate in my pocket and pulled it out, seeing the caller ID.

"Rikki, hey, are you coming?" I asked, pulling my purse from my bag.

"Nope, I think I'll pass. Things to do, you know. Like breaking up with Zane."

I narrowed my eyes. "Don't change the subject. You have to come. To support Bella. Come on, it's been days since Bella met up with her dad. And out secret is still perfectly secret."

"Yeah, for know."

I counted out my money as Bella appeared beside me. I quickly lowered my phone and pressed it to my jacket, to stifle the sound.

"Thanks for coming," Bella greeted me, fixing her skirt. "I'm really nervous. Added to it, everything with Rikki."

"You look great,-" I paid for my drinks and Bella took the tray, thanking him.

I followed her to the table where Cleo was already sitting.

"Um, sorry, I have to go." I told Rikki, sitting opposite Cleo and taking my latte from the tray.

"See you, have fun supporting!" Rikki mocked and I laughed, putting down the phone.

I watched Bella fidget nervously before turning to Cleo.

"Is Lewis coming?" I asked, blowing on my coffee.

"Yep, he texted me saying he'll be late though, sorry, Bella."

Bella shrugged, playing with her hands. "One less person to see me make a fool of myself."

Cleo and I were about to disagree as Bella stood up. "Oh, they're ready... Oh, help..."

Her manager was leaning against the doorway of the staff room, signing for her to come.

"Good luck!" Cleo called and I gave her the thumbs up, both to which she smiled faintly.

Bella went off, muttering to herself.

"Hey, everybody, welcome to Bradley's!"

I clapped loudly as Cleo sipped from her cup.

"For the first time performing here at Bradley's," the guy shouted into the microphone. "We have Bella Hartley!"

We cheered as Bella sat on her stool by the microphone, trying to look calm. The guitar and piano began to play and the whole cafe went silent.

"I've been, thinking over," Bella sang, beautifully, smiling directly at us. "All the things that you've been saying to me. No reason or other, do I deceive myself, when I'm making out to be."

Randomly, both mine and Cleo's phones started vibrating. Not taking my eyes off the stage, I reached for it.

It was a text from an unknown number. There wasn't a message but an attachment which I opened curiously. I saw out of the corner of my eye, Cleo pick up her own phone. It was a picture and at first I didn't react, not seeing it yet. Then I saw it and gasped. The picture was fuzzy but I could easily make out Ryan Hartley, Bella's dad. He was standing looking down at Bella, who was on the floor, her mermaid tail clearly visible. My eyes wide, I looked up at Cleo and her expression mirrored mine.

Cleo POV

Lewis stared at the screen and groaned, running a hand through his hair. I stretched back and took Emma's phone from him. After getting the text, we had rushed outside and called Lewis and Rikki. We moved into Emma's car for privacy and now Emma was in the front and I was in the passenger seat with Lewis in the back. Rikki was on her way, probably getting ready to say 'I told you so'.

"We don't know if Bella's dad had anything to do with this." Lewis tried to reason and I twisted round to show him, after a look from Emma.

"See, he's looking right up at the camera. Doesn't look good for him, does it?" I snarled, passing the phone to Emma.

"Guys, this is serious! If this was Denman, we need to destroy her

proof." Emma demanded but Lewis frowned, sitting back and rubbing his eyes.

"No, she'll be suspecting that." Lewis reminded us with a sigh. "And I expect she'll have her team guarding the moonpool so we can't pull a Denman."

Rikki had arrived as Lewis was talking, managing to hear the last part of what Lewis said as she slid in beside him. "A Denman?"

Lewis nodded, shuffling over to give her room to sit. "Jumping in the moonpool when the lunar eclipse is overhead."

Rikki was holding a smoothie in her hand and drank from the straw noisily. "Yeah, but that was for, like, twelve hours."

I was watching their conversation through the mirror then made a face, and twisted round. "What about Charlotte? The alignment of the planets thing?"

Emma started tapping the steering wheel frantically. "That's once every fifty years."

"Why doesn't Lewis give Max a call? See if there are any other moon phases that'll get us out of this situation." Rikki commented, her voice dripping with sarcasm. "Oh, where's Bella, by the way? She should be interested in this."

I shuddered involuntarily at the thought of a random person having my number.

"Wait," Lewis scowled. "You all got the same text. So did Bella?"

I raised my head and groaned. "Probably. But she was on stage. Seeing us run out on her. Oh, great."

Emma laid her head back, closing her eyes while Rikki shook her head.

"Hey, does anybody have wi-fi?" Lewis asked, sitting forward to retrieve Emma's phone, which she held out. "I'm going to see if I can get into contact with Max."

"Really?" I inquired while Rikki muttered something about Lewis being friends with him on facebook.

There was a knock on my window and I jumped, holding back a squeal. Bella was peering into the car, looking confused.

"Cleo," Rikki warned, finishing her drink. "If you let her in, I swear-!"

I rolled down the window, smiling sheepishly. "It's not really a good time."

Bella stuck her head in and Rikki sighed, defeated. "You tell her."

Emma picked up my phone from her seat and held it out for her to see.

"What is- Oh, my go- Is that me?!" Bella shrieked, taking my phone and studying it. "How- Oh, no-."

Rikki leaned forward, clearly disgusted and closed the window. Bella knocked several times before I sighed, opened the door and climbed into the back seat. Bella got in and shut the door, looking peeved.

"Max is still alive, and living in a retirement home in Sunny Meadow." Lewis read out and pulled on his seat belt. "Come on, Emma."

Lewis POV

"Max, hi. Do you remember me?"

Max turned his head and grunted, pointing for Cleo and I to sit. "Of course I do. I'm old, not stupid, Lewis."

Cleo and I followed his orders and sat opposite Max on the sofa. He smiled at us and Cleo looked confused.

"I'm glad you two got back together." Max smirked and Cleo laughed freely even with our problem heavy on her shoulders.

"How can you tell?" I chuckled, watching Cleo with a smile.

"You act like Gracie and I acted." Max explained, grinning from ear to ear. "It's been a while. Is there a reason for your visit?"

Cleo looked down and I frowned. "The girls have been exposed. We were hoping that you could help. A mermaid loses their power if they're in the moonpool as the planets are aligned..."

Maax nodded, understanding perfectly. "I see. Well, the lunar eclipse takes your powers for twelve hours, but I'm guessing that's not what you want."

Cleo looked upset and I took her hand.

"But," Max began and I froze. "There is the blue moon. It's when there are two full moons in one month. Very rare. That's where we get the expression."

"How long?" Cleo asked, sounding choked up.

"For seventy-five years. It's how Louise lost her powers."

When I glanced at Cleo, she was crying heavily, embarrassed by the tears.

"Is there any other way?" Cleo cried, wiping away tears as I put my arm around her.

Max looked sorry, shaking his head.

69 Hours Later

Cleo POV

The blue moon passed and I became aware of my clothes clinging to me. I was in water and I had legs. I looked over at Emma who was staring down at herself in sadness. Rikki was already trodding out of the water and Bella had disappeared into the tunnel out into sea.

I wasn't aware that this would be the last time we all saw each other for the next 4 Years.

Hope you enjoyed! I wrote this chapter so many times and either deleted it or it deleted itself. So I'm pretty happy to move on :-)

24. Competition

Hey, I was really pleased by Guest5's review and their idea to make a contest for the name and gender of Cleo and Lewis' baby! I really like the names they gave and am interested in anybody else's ideas! So just review and give a name for both a boy or a girl, and perhaps middle names! I already had a name in mind but I thought that Guest5's idea was much better!

25. Chapter Twenty-Three: Baby

Chapter Twenty-Three

Baby

Cleo POV

Dr. Denman sighed, sitting back, allowing me time to think straight. I fidgeted uncomfortably, looking down at the papers of my DNA before setting them down.

"Oh, um." I brushed back my hair and smiled awkwardly. "I already know."

Denman looked surprised, sitting forward, paying attention. "You do?"

I nodded and stroked Fraser comfortingly, who didn't seem to like Denman. "Yes, I found out a few days ago. We were going to go to the doctors next week but, um..." I touched my stomach, smiling. "I guess there's no need now."

Denman nodded at the notes on the coffee table and I reached for them again.

"I don't think going to the doctors is a good idea." Denman told me and I glanced up. "There are irregularities in the DNA cells. I would need to do more tests when your baby has developed more but I'm guessing..."

I blinked and blew air from my mouth. "She's a mermaid?"

"She?" Denman noted and I shrugged.

"Well, if my baby's a mermaid, she must be a girl, right? Unless

mermen exist?"

Denman look thoughtful and she started flicking through sheets, absentmindedly. "Interesting."

I bit my lip. "So... Cariba?"

She shook her head and I frowned. "I still have to get the test results back but I got hold of her medical file at the doctors. It didn't show anything odd. And I'm guessing Rikki's baby would have come into contact with water by now."

I laughed quietly, running a hand through my hair. "I can't imagine a baby with a mermaid tail."

Cleo POV

I was surrounded by a white light and though it seemed so real, I knew I was dreaming. I squinted at the bright light and I raised my hands to shade my eyes. It was then I noticed something was different. I looked down and stared with widened eyes at my stomach which looked around 8 or 9 months pregnant. I breathed heavily and touched my belly, immediately feeling a kick. I felt rather than heard a voice from behind.

"I hope your guilty."

I turned but saw nothing but the same bright light. I wrapped my arms around my stomach, protectively, when I noticed the blood. I gasped, looking down to see my belly slashed open, bleeding pouring out. Without realising, the light had faded to a dark red, matching the colour of the blood.

"Now you'll know how Rikki will feel when I kill her baby."

I pressed my hands delicately against my bump in a feeble attempt to stop the bleeding. A few random drops of blood landed on my hands and shaking, I realised they were running from my eyes, down my face. The last thing I saw was the red liquid covering my eyes.

I woke feeling completely lost, my arms clutching my flat stomach. I felt around and touched Lewis' arm, sighing with relief. I was in bed, Lewis beside me. I felt tears, real tears, on my face. I lay there, the memory of the dream still real. I reached down and gently rested my hand on my stomach, imagining the kick. I paused before quietly tiptoeing out of bed and creeping towards the door. I grabbed my mobile on the way out and searched for Rikki's number. I glanced at the clock in the hall which read 3 o' clock in the morning. Once I was in the livingroom, I called her, sitting down anxiously. It rang several times and I thought she wouldn't pick up the phone but the ringing stopped as someone answered.

"Cleo, wow, you're up late." Rikki spoke, sounding exhausted.

"Had a bad dream..." I started. "Rikki, I have to tell you something."

Rikki yawned. "Shoot."

I took a deep breath and squeezed my eyes shut. "I'm

pregnant."

There was silence then sound exploded from the other line. "Oh, my god, Cleo, that's fantastic! I'm so happy for you, congrats!"

I walked over to the kitchen and pulled out the milk carton from the fridge. "Thank you, I'm so happy, it's just..."

I poured myself some milk and drank the entire glass. "Okay... Don't be mad but... I got into contact with Denman and she tested my DNA and found out that my baby is a mermaid and I'm calling because there is a chance, so is your own."

I waited, flinching, for Rikki to reply and when she did, I was surprised. "Oh, my god! Your baby's a mermaid? So... Cariba?"

I frowned, scratching my head. "Um... the Denman thing?"

I heard Rikki sigh and I prepared myself. "I thought of getting into contact with her myself when I was pregnant. I nearly called her a few times. I wanted to know."

I raised my eyebrows and relief washed over me. "Thank goodness you don't hate me."

Rikki laughed and I heard a cry. "Uh..! Cariba's keeping me up and Zane is sleeping like a log."

I heard the sound of rustling before Rikki spoke again. "Cariba is definitely not a mermaid, I checked... But... could you give a bit of her DNA to Denman? Just say it's your's? Or if not, maybe Lewis? Or you could test it, maybe?"

I opened my mouth and my eyebrows shot up to my hairline. "Oh, sure, yeah! I'll see what I can do."

Bella POV

"Will, hey!" I heard Emma say, purposely loud to warn me.

I was in the changing room, trying on a blue cocktail dress whilst Emma was hunting for shoes. I heard Will's voice and immediately froze.

"Emma, what are doing here?"

I quickly worked out a plan and zipped up my dress, fixing my hair. I strutted out, hands on hips, looking good and giving a twirl for Emma, pretending not to see Will. I turned and saw Emma looking horrified, obviously thinking I hadn't heard her talking with Will. I looked at Will and pretended to look surprised. He looked stunned and I smiled inwardly.

"Will, what's up?" I said coolly and took the heels from Emma. I slipped them on and showed them off. "What do you think?"

Emma closed her mouth and nodded, understanding. "You look great. Will? How about a guy's opinion?"

Will looked between us and stared at me. "Yeah, you look great."

I smiled and folded my arms. "So, is there a reason you're here? Shopping for the perfect dress, are we?"

Will smirked and glanced at Emma who was grinning. "I saw Emma and I needed to talk."

I acted natural even though I knew what he meant. "Don't mind me! I'm going to try this on." I took the purple and white dress from Emma and walked back into the changing room. Once he couldn't see me, I stood still, listening intently. I began to get changed and heard snippets of their conversation.

"Okay, well, I'll get going. Call me tonight though. I do need to talk about the thing."

I walked out and Will stared at me once more. I changed shoes and stared at them expectantly.

"So?"

Will commented, before Emma. "Both are beautiful."

I smiled, feeling light-hearted.

"Oh, um," Will remembered and nodded at us. "It was nice to see you."

We watched him leave then Emma pounced on me.

"Oh, Bella, that was perfect! You flirted exactly the right amount and you also slipped in lots of 'look at what you lost'! Plus, you showed him how fine you are after breaking up!"

I grinned and we did a happy dance, laughing loudly.

"Come on," I laughed freely. "I do need a dress."

Thanks for everyone who entered the competition to choose the gender and name of Lewis and Cleo's baby! Keep commenting because though I have the name and gender in mind, I can still change it! I loved the names given and I'll mention the person who gave the name. There will probably be two people to thank as I am choosing a first name and a middle name from different comments. I know most of you really want to know so I'll try to slip it in next chapter!

26. Chapter Twenty-Four: Shouldn't Have Come

Chapter Twenty-Four

Should Not Have Come

Bella POV

I let out a sigh, sunlight creeping in through a gap in the curtains. I blinked rapidly, pushing my blonde hair out of my eyes. I closed my eyes and tried desperately to remember my dream, my head thumping. I suddenly heard heavy breathing beside me and lifted my head. I squeaked involuntarily, frozen. Will was asleep beside me, his body

to the side, head towards me.

Memories came flooding back to me. "No, no, no, no, no, no, no."

Without rustling the sheets, I placed a foot to the floor and the other followed. Will mumbled and my heart felt lighter, though I had a hangover headache. My eyes widened and I stared down at my hands, relieved I wasn't wearing a ring.

14 Hours Earlier - 10pm

Cleo POV

"So, what do you want?" I asked, getting up from the table. "It's on me."

Bella looked at Emma, who was twirling her hair around her finger. "It's girls night, I think I'll have a treat. Could I have a bahama mama?" Bella asked, giggling as I rolled my eyes.

Emma nodded, a look of determination on her face. "Yes, I think we all could use a treat. My life is at a sucky place, relationship-wise and even though Bella sort of has Jason, -"

"She can't forget about Will," Bella finished and her face fell. She tried to smile brightly when Emma bit her lip.

Emma turned to Kim, who kept glancing at her phone. "And Kim is waiting for a boy to call?"

Kim looked up and grimaced, running a hand through her hair. "I guess you're right. I just broke up with Ben, my boyfriend."

I sat down beside her and pulled her into a hug, Kim trying to wave me off.

Emma groaned. "Well, I certainly ruined the night."

Bella perked up and shook her head. "No way. Cleo's pregnant! And her and Lewis bought a house! Plus, we're hot, single ladies who can have fun without men!"

Kim and I laughed while Emma chuckled, still looking a little down.

"Okay, I'm going to order a bahama mama for myself and a golden cadillac, Emma's favourite!" Bella told us, standing up confidently. "Kim will have a margarita! Cleo's out on alcohol so just a soda or a virgin margarita then?"

Bella rushed off before I could add that I wasn't comfortable with Kim drinking on my watch. Kim's phone buzzed and she frowned, fumbling with it. After a pause, her phone stopped and I looked at her.

Kim laughed, glancing at me. "He can try calling tomorrow. But tonight's Girls Night!"

Cleo POV

"So, baby names. Of course, for a girl, obviously, Kim."

I snorted and Kim waved her hands. "Here me out! Kevin for a boy and Beth for a girl!"

Emma grinned and I paused. "Beth, that's lovely."

Emma tapped the table excitedly and I almost expected her to raise her hand like a student desperate to answer the question. "Okay, Gracie for a girl and Max for a boy. You know, Ms. Chatam's friends!" Emma raises her eyebrows and I nodded thoughtfully, giggling at her.

Bella sighed, finishing her drink. She smiled at a guy by the bar and I thought of Lewis, wistfully. "You know, it's getting late."

Kim hiccupped loudly and I groaned. "Kim, let's go. I don't want you out like this without me."

Kim slurped down her margarita and rolled her eyes at me, not making too much fuss.

I looked at Emma, who was on a buzz, taking a million pictures a minute, and at Bella who was giggling at the cute guy. "Can you two get a cab or do you want a lift?"

Emma nodded and I took Kim's hand, dragging her off her seat. Emma got up in a daze and I led them towards the door.

"You guys go on, I'll get a cab." Bella muttered and I paused before nodding.

We walked out the door and I sighed as the cool air hit me, leaving behind the smell of alcohol mixed with smoke. We walked down to the car, neither of them seeming chatty.

I unlocked the door and pushed Emma inside, wrapping her seat belt round her.

"I had fun tonight." Kim mumbled and I smiled.

The night had gone slowly downhill as they had become tipsy and all seemed to be having more fun than me. After a while, I had become aware that I was going to have a baby and become a mum. I wasn't going to have time for going to bars, much like Rikki. She had said no to the invitation and I was wondering if I should have too. Maybe as a married women, girls nights were meant to stop.

Will POV

"Bella! Are you drunk?!"

Bella stumbled into my apartment and I rushed to steady her. She muttered something and I led her to the couch. She flopped onto it and I went to get her water, shutting the door.

"We made a mistake!" Bella called and I placed the glass to her lips.

"Oh, did we?" I replied, tilting her head back like a baby.

Bella nodded, rubbing her head. "We shouldn't have broken up."

I stood still and set down the cup.

"I know." I sighed.

3rd Person - No POV

A crash was heard from all around, then the terrible silence that followed, as though the world was holding its breath. If there was a light, a car would have been seen, wrecked and ruined by the blow. A random light flickered, highlighting the broken glass of most windows. In the house beside, a light was turned on, and curtains drawn.

In the backseat, a cough was heard, followed by jagged breathing. The person mustered all of their energy to shriek out into the darkness.

"CLEO!?"

Definitely not my best work but I had to get through all the boring stuff to get to the crash. Hope you liked, sorry for the wait and please keep reviewing... Perhaps if you want to know who survives and who doesn't?

27. Author's Note: Recap So Far

Author's Note

Recap So Far

Chapter One: Rikki goes into labour with Zane's baby and is rushed to the hospital. Bella goes to collect her things, from the apartment she once shared with Will, after their break-up. On the way, she sees Cleo Setori out walking her dog and they have a short and awkward conversation.

Chapter Two: Emma is working with her friend, Amy, as an orthodontist. Ash comes to tell her that he is going to propose to Amy which flashes Emma back to a time when Ash was head over heels for her. It shows how Emma arranged, without realising, Ash and Amy's meeting. We also find out Emma is friends with Will.

Chapter Three: Cleo comes home after walking her dog, Fraser and discusses seeing Bella with Lewis. Cleo's pregnancy stick reads negative.

Chapter Four: Ash and Bella both work at the same school, Ash as a school teacher and Bella as the guidance teacher. Emma pays a visit to tell Ash that she is fine with him getting engaged and meets Bella. She's shocked to discover Bella is friends with Ash and Bella is shocked to discover Emma is friends with Will. Will tags along with Emma to see Bella.

Chapter Five: Cleo bumps into Zane at the hospital, where she is going to see the OB-GYN. Zane explains that Rikki is in labour and

Rikki begs her to stay. Meanwhile, Bella sees Will, in the cafe they used to go to as a couple, on a date.

Chapter Six: This chapter is in Will's POV to what Bella sees at Truffles. It turns out he is on a job interview for ESL.

Chapter Seven: Rikki, Lewis, Zane and Cleo welcome a baby girl called Cariba Layla Bennett into the world. Rikki gives Cleo their number so they can meet up. Bella is crushed thinking Will is dating.

Chapter Eight: Rikki welcomes Cariba home as Emma and Amy plan her wedding. Emma was asked to be maid of honour and she agrees. Ash sets Emma up with his friend. Cleo thinks that it is possible Cariba is a mermaid and she gets a call from the marine biologist who once gave them trouble, Dr. Linda Denman.

Chapter Nine: This chapter is based on Rikki and Zane dealing with their baby and their dads, who are too involved. Zane picks up the phone to Denman.

Chapter Ten: Will flashes back to buying Bella a beautiful Valentine's Day and realises that he wants her back. Emma is unhappy on Valentine's Day.

Chapter Eleven: Cleo betrays the girls as she meets up with Denman so she can get questions answered. Denman asks questions about mermaids and we find out Cleo is no longer a mermaid

Chapter Twelve: Denman asks questions and Cleo lies to keep her ex-friends safe. Cleo lies to Lewis about where she is.

Chapter Thirteen: After more questions, Cleo and Denman's lunch ends and she gets a mysterious text saying that she will get news soon.

Chapter Fourteen: Emma is on her date that Ash set up. She calls Amy, wondering if Sam knows Ash and her dated. She is angry to learn he doesn't. Meanwhile, Rikki and Zane are freaking out because of Denman's call. They call Cleo who lies and says Denman didn't call. They then call Emma who hasn't been called yet. At the end of the chapter, Emma gets a call and immediately knows who it is.

Chapter Fifteen: Cleo visits Rikki's house so she and Emma can discuss Denman. She tries to avoid Emma and goes to see Cariba. She takes a swab of her DNA.

Chapter Sixteen: Cleo and Emma have a happy reunion and they decide what to do about Dr. Denman. Cleo gets a call and excuses herself. Denman is ready to do tests and just needs Cariba's DNA which Cleo has. Dr. Brody, Cleo's doctor, calls with news.

Chapter Seventeen: Cleo gives Denman the DNA and Will bought a ring, planning to propose to Bella. Cleo finds out she is fertile and can have children. Dr. Denman sees some unusual results from the test of Cleo's DNA.

Chapter Eighteen: Starts with a flashback to university and we find out Bella, Rikki and Caroline share a dorm. Bella tells Rikki that she wants to tell her dad about being a mermaid. In the present time, Emma arranges to meet Bella and tells her Will is going to

propose.

Chapter Nineteen: In a flashback, we find out that Emma went to a different university to Bella and Rikki. Lewis and Cleo went to the same school where he studied atmospheric science and she studied oceanography. They talk about Bella telling her dad. Everyone but Rikki agrees and she storms out

Chapter Twenty: Bella reacts to Will planning on proposing and we learn she has a boyfriend. We find out Caroline is going to become a pharmacist and Rikki studied to be a marine archeologist. Bella tells her dad even though her family aren't going on their holiday, which is the reason for her wanting to tell. Her dad freaks out saying Bella isn't his daughter and Rikki goes to pick her up.

Chapter Twenty-One: Bella's dad meets with Denman to expose her for money. They agree on a plan and her dad succeeds, getting evidence without Bella knowing she's been tricked. Rikki warned Bella, who didn't listen and if he betrays her again, their friendship is over. In the present, Denman tells Cleo that she is pregnant.

Chapter Twenty-Two: The girls get an anonymous text with a picture attached. It is of Bella with a tail. They try to fix the situation by contacting Max. He tells them about the blue moon. It's when there are two full moons in one month which is very rare. It draws away their powers for 75 years. The girls lose their powers and become ordinary, normal college students.

Chapter Twenty-Three: In the present, Cleo confesses knowing about being pregnant. Denman now wants to do texts on her. She has a disturbing dream about losing her baby.

Chapter Twenty-Four: Kim, Cleo, Bella and Emma go out for girls night as most of them are feeling down. They get tipsy but Cleo doesn't drink now that she's pregnant. Bella doesn't go with the others and instead wakes up in Will's bed. Kim, Emma and Cleo are in a car crash and Emma is the only one we know to be conscious.

Hey, I did a recap of the story so far as I started reading a fanfic I hadn't read in a while. I completely had no clue what was happening. So this is to remind everyone and I had to do a lot of reading back! I completely forgot about some important things! Please do the usual R & R! Do you want Cariba (I'm not saying anything about Cleo's baby) to be a mermaid?

28. Chapter Twenty-Five: Hospital

Chapter Twenty-Five

Hospital

Cleo POV

"She's comin to."

"She's suffered a mild injury to the head during the blow."

"Stop the bleeding by her right ear."

"She's losing too much blood!"

"She's losing consciousness!"

Emma POV

"No, listen!" I yelled to the nurse nearest as I was wheeled through the double doors. "Cleo! The dark haired girl! She's pregnant! Forget about me, just help her!"

I was pushed down and tears streamed down my face as I thought of Cleo, an oxygen mask over her lips. I was lifted up onto the bed and tried to focus to what was happening. I tried to speak but failed.

"Stop the bleeding, remove the glass."

Glass? They were insane, I wasn't injured, Cleo was the one who needed help. Unless she was already- no, no, oh, god.

"She's stable, -"

Were they talking about me? No, not with all these people still buzzing around me. My vision became blurred and my eyelids flickered.

"Stay with us, how much blood has she lost?"

I squeezed my eyes shut and opened them again. I could focus now and no longer felt like I was drifting between consciousness and unconsciousness.

"We've stopped the bleeding on her forehead."

"She's stable."

I peered up at a woman with dark hair. She had kind but serious eyes.

"You're going to be fine."

Rikki POV

I didn't feel as though I needed to wipe away the tears falling. I didn't feel ashamed to cry in front of everyone. I had a good enough reason. I forced myself to look up. Zane was beside me, looking grave. He stared down at his lap, zoned out, oblivious to the world. I looked to my left and saw Ash and Amy sitting in the corner. They weren't talking, just holding each other. It made me feel alone because I knew Zane had no intention of putting his arm around me, he was off in Zane land. I longed for Cariba in my arms. We had decided in seconds after the call, that we would leave Cariba with Terry. A hospital was not a good place for a baby and I didn't want this place, this memory, to be Cariba's first outing into the world. Bella laid her head on Will's shoulder and sobbed. Will's eyes were red and puffy as was everyone else's. Bella saw me looking and tried to smile. The attempt failed as a sob caught in her throat and she was bawling again. I wanted to go over to her but the atmosphere was different, as if nobody could talk. I felt very alone. A nurse in pale uniform

walked up to us and only I raised my head. She nodded for me to come speak in private.

Emma POV

I looked passed the nurse by my bed and saw Rikki standing by the doorway, her make up smudged with tears. I tried to sit up but the nurse beside me gave me a meaningful look. I sighed and lay back down, my whole body aching. Rikki rushed over and fresh tears started to fall from her eyes. Without realising, I was crying too.

"Cleo? Is she...? And the baby? And Kim, she was in the car!" I spluttered, looking up at Rikki as she took my hand.

She glanced at the nurse before turning back to me. "I talked with the nurse outside. Kim is fine, she had a mild concussion and dislocated her shoulder. Her dad and Sam are in with her now."

I raised my eyebrows, heart in my throat. "And Cleo?"

Rikki's breath caught and she closed her eyes. "She suffered the worst from the crash. Something about the angle but... They say the baby is fine but she... They're doing all they can."

We started crying silently and a nurse came to the door.

"Yeah," Rikki started. "I better go. The nurse only wanted to discuss your condition but she said I could see you. Everyone's here."

Rikki smiled at me and walked out of the room. I turned to look at the nurse by my bed.

"She didn't tell me how Cleo is. How is she? What is it, like, she hit her head or...?"

The nurse looked at me with sad eyes.

Lewis POV

I was led through the door, shaking. Cleo was in bed, looking pale and weak, a blue bruise on her forehead. She also had bandage wraples around her head. I rushed to her side as Cleo looked up. She managed a smile before frowning.

"C-can I speak..." My voice was strained and I swallowed. "Can we speak alone?"

The doctors by her side exchanged looks. "I'm sorry, we can't leave your side when your like this."

I held Cleo's hand and she nodded sullenly. She lifted a hand and waved it for me to come closer. It caused her pain so I delicately took her hand and set it down. I did as she wanted and she licked her lips.

"Don't let them- let them find out about... about her." She whispered and I opened my mouth to question her but she interrupted.

"Her, our baby. Don't let them find out. Her DNA is different. She's a- a mermaid, Lewis. Ask them, then go see her... Denman."

Okay...?"

I pulled my head back to look at the doctor closest and when I had looked back, Cleo's eyes were closed.

"Hey-!"

"Calm down," A doctor told me, pointing at the machine by Cleo. "It's just the morphine. She'll come around soon. Best to let her rest."

I stared at Cleo, her hair falling over her face. "So, did she know what she was saying? Or was it the drugs?"

Another doctor sighed, shrugging. "She may have been confused. She kept mumbling while we were taking her in. Something about 'not getting her'."

I wiped my eyes and turned to face the doctor. "The baby? Is everything alright? No... uh, irregularities in it's DNA structure?"

Dr. Denman POV

"I'm sorry to hear that, Lewis. I hope she pulls through."

I was genuinely upset and didn't want any harm to happen to either her or her baby.

"I know about the baby being a mermaid. Cleo told me. It's just that the doctors say there were no irregularities."

I opened my door to my lab, taking a seat at my desk. "That's surprising. Especially with the results of Rikki's baby's DNA. Yes, I did, moving onto the big picture."

I pulled out as file and flicked through, mumbling to myself.

"I did several tests. Each time, the DNA structure has changed. At first, the DNA changed slightly in contact with water. The next day more of a change."

"What? It's changing gradually?"

"Yes, but funny thing, yesterday, I looked at Rikki's medical charts while pregnant. At first, there was something. I'm assuming the doctors looked into it, but it changed."

Lewis held his breath from the other side.

"I'll keep testing but I think Cleo is fine. For now at least."

Sorry this is very rushed, but it all had to happen quickly and I had to get it all in. Hope you like :-). Please review to say if you liked! Also, people have been wanting Cleo to have twins? I was considering it but what would you guys like?

Chapter Twenty-Six

Blast From the Past

>Rikki POV <p>

The passenger seat door swung open and Bella popped her head round.

"Hey, sorry I'm late," she sighed, crashing into the seat.

A balloon bounced off of my face and I swatted it away, into the back seat. Bella leaned over the seat and threw down her bags and the beautiful bunch of purple and blue flowers.

"What's in the bags?" I asked as I swallowed my muffin and set down my coffee as Bella struggled with her seatbelt.

I started the engine as Bella set a bag on her lap and delved in. As I reversed out of my parking space outside Bella's apartment building, Bella pulled several items from her shopping bags.

"I bought lots of Get Well Soon rubbish and loads of baby things. I got maternity clothes like this super cute white dress with embroidery at the bottom." Bella explained, waving a pink and white striped top near my face. "I saw all these baby clothes and I'm not ashamed to say that I may have purchased everything in the store."

I glanced towards Bella as she folded the clothes and frowned. "Not to burst your bubble but it might be a little... insensitive to buy Cleo all these baby things."

Bella stared at me in surprise. "Cleo's strong! She'll get through this and make me the baby's godmother and auntie and I will spoil him slash her!"

I let out a sigh and avoided her gaze. "Okay, just... wait, before you show off all these things, okay?"

Bella threw the bag behind her and folded her arms. "Alright. But your just trying to snag godmother."

I laughed quietly and turned the corner to head to the hospital. Bella was right, Cleo was strong and I had complete faith that she and her baby would get through this. But Cleo was very emotional, her hormones going crazy and I'm not ignorant to that. I remember struggling through this time during my pregnancy but I was never put through anything like this.

My phone started playing paramore, startling me as I was pulled from my daydream.

"Oh, I'll get it!" Bella exclaimed, searching around the car for my mobile.

"It's in the compartment, I think."

Just at the last ring, Bella answered the call and held my phone to her ear. "Hello, this is Bella speaking."

I sat still to listen as I turned down the road passed the library and college. Bella murmured quietly, agreeing with the person on the other end.

"Who is it?" I asked, swerving round as I drove into my lane.

I saw Bella move from the corner of my eye and I kept my eyes on the road as she bustled about in her purse.

"Okay, the numbers 3753...81...29. Did you get that?" Bella spoke into the phone, eyes glued to her knees. "Okay, I'm gunna call you back from my phone in a bit. Don't do anything yet. Okay. Bye."

I shifted in my seat to see behind me and Bella took off her seatbelt.

"What are you doing?-", I asked quickly, spinning the steering wheel into place and glancing over at her quickly.

Bella grimaced at me and placed her hand on the car door. "Sorry, I have to go. I'll give you one guess who just called. I'll ring Will to pick me up, okay? Send Cleo and Lewis my love!"

I dropped my hands from the wheel and grabbed Bella's arm. "Denman? Why was she calling me? Where are you going?"

Bella pushed open the door and hopped out, only grabbing her handbag and throwing down my phone onto the seat. "Sorry, Rikki, I'll explain later. See you."

I watched in amazement as Bella manouvered around the cars in the lanes, raising her hand apologetically towards them. Keeping one hand on the steering wheel, I grabbed my phone that was on the passenger seat where Bella had thrown it down in her escape.

Emma POV

The door opened and Lewis appeared, nodding at me. I smiled and told Ash I'd ring him back.

"Sorry to interrupt," Lewis apologized, taking a seat next to me.

I slipped my phone into my jacket pocket and shook my head. "It's okay. So, how are you? Bella and Rikki will be here any minute now."

Lewis nodded and breathed heavily, clasping his hands together. "I'm fine. They're going to be okay, the doctors are saying."

I pursed my lips in the silence, feeling my phone vibrate. I reached over and took Lewis' hand in mine, not able to find any words of comfort.

"There was a moment." Lewis turned to me and I tilted my head. "Well. Just after the accident, when Cleo was first entered into hospital the night of the crash with you and Kim... She told me something."

I nodded encouragingly, not knowing where this was going.

"She was obviously in shock and not quite in the right mind but in her confusion... she told me that she didn't want them to get the baby." Lewis told me, his face hard to read.

"Oh," I replied, sitting back in my chair thoughtfully. "The doctors, maybe?"

Lewis shrugged and I felt my phone vibrate once again. Sighing, I took it out and opened up my text. There were several texts from Rikki each sent in the same several minutes.

"Rikki's outside," I read out to Lewis as I scrolled through. "Bella had to run off. I-."

"What?" Lewis asked, leaning back in his chair and watching my face. "Is there a problem?"

I stuffed my phone back into my pocket and stood up, sighing heavily. "I'm sorry about this but I couldn't get someone to cover my shift at work. They're asking me to go back."

Lewis nodded understandingly and stood up, pulling me into a hug. "No problem. I'll see you."

I squeezed him back and headed down the corridor, my heels clicking loudly as I walked. I avoided the eyes of a nurse walking passed and pulled out my phone once more. Quickly sending a text to Rikki, I bolted through the doors, once I was sure Lewis couldn't see me anymore. I told Rikki to wait outside for me to arrive and that I'd be quick, my fingers typing so fast that I ignored several spelling errors. I flew around the wet floors sign and skipped down the flight of stairs in a hurry. Once I entered the reception waiting area, I slowed down, keeping my cool as I made my way towards the automatic doors.

"Miss Gilbert?!"

I skidded to a halt and flashed around, partly wondering if I had imagined the voice. I looked around oddly and the nurse behind the reception desk waved at me. I tried to breathe normally as I slowly walked up to her, my heart thumping in my ribcage.

The receptionist smiled at me. "Miss Gilbert? There is a car waiting outside to pick you up."

"What?" I replied, frowning suspiciously and narrowing my eyes. "Who sent it?"

The receptionist cocked her head to one side and picked at her nails. "I was told you were aware of her sending for you?"

I paused slightly and widened my eyes. "Oh! Of course, sorry, my mistake. Thank you."

I turned abruptly, ending the conversation and quickened my pace. The doors slid open and the warm Gold Coast breeze hit me, the blazing sun burning down on my back. I stopped and looked around for the car, trying to look natural. To the right I noticed a white mercedes parked outside the hospital and rolling my eyes, I knew this was the car. Denman's style.

I walked up to the car and squinted into the window as the sun shone down onto it. I waited outside unsurely and just as I thought, the door opened and a man strode out, pulling down his sunglasses. I smiled confidently at him and put my hands on my hips.

"Where are we going?" I demanded, raising an eyebrow at him.

The man gave me a look and locked his car hesitantly. "I'm sorry?"

I blinked awkwardly and flushed red, facepalming inwardly. "Oh, god, sorry! I was told that a car was sent to pick me up and I just assumed..."

The man scratched his face and nodded at me again with an odd expression, before walking passed. I scrunched up my eyes and grimaced, cringing at my stupidity. I rolled my eyes at myself and thrust my hand into my jacket pocket, pulling out my phone and unlocking it. I had four new messages, all from Rikki and just as I opened the first, I felt eyes on me. I looked up quickly and froze as I saw someone standing staring at me, smiling.

The woman grinned at me, waving, clutching a pair of sunglasses. She had smiling brown eyes and her hair was an mahogany brown, glistening in the sunlight. She was leaning against an open door of her blue volkswagen polo, wearing a pale pink skater dress. Walking slowly, I made my way up to the woman, glancing around in the unlikely chance I could see Rikki.

"Long time no see, eh?" the woman, called to me and I choked on my breath.

"No way! Oh my, god."

Bella POV

The car pulled up by the pavement and I waved to Will. He smiled at me and stopped the car, giving me time to hop in.

"What now?" he grinned at me and I blew air out of my mouth.

I put my seatbelt on and pulled out my phone. "Denman called me. We're meeting up. I needed a ride."

Will turned on his SatNav and looked at me curiously. "Where to?"

I flicked through my messages. "She texted me the address a few minutes ago."

I recited the address to Will and he entered it into his SatNav. We pulled out of the parking space and onto the busy road.

"I assume you know what your doing and you don't need me butting into your business and such but..."

I turned to look at Will expectantly. He had a concerned look on his face and looked away from my gaze. I frowned, opening my mouth to say something when Will reached over his hand and grasped mine that was resting on my lap. I looked down and widened my eyes, shocked.

"I'll pick you up when you're ready, I'll drive around, have lunch at a cafe or something. But I'll be minutes away, okay?" Will muttered, keeping his eyes on the road.

I squeezed his hand, nodding.

Emma POV

"Wow, it really has been a while."

Charlotte nodded towards the passenger door she had opened for me and I raised an eyebrow at her, displaying my feelings clearly.

Charlotte sighed. "Emma, get in. We need to talk."

I felt my phone vibrate once again and bit my lip uncertainly. Rikki was waiting for me with news about Bella running off with Denman, I had to see her.

"Can we meet later today?" I asked as Charlotte's lips became a thin, tight line. "It's just, this isn't the best time."

Charlotte twisted round and scanned the carpark, furrowing her eyebrows. "I know, you're about to go see Denman. I'm here to stop you. We really need to talk about this."

I scowled, glaring at Charlotte accusingly. "How do you know about any of this?!"

A horn beeped to the left and we both turned to see Rikki. She was in the car, her window rolled down, motioning for me to come. She hadn't recognised Charlotte from the distance.

"Come with us, Charlotte." Charlotte looked at me in disbelief. "You're right, you do need to talk. I only agree to listen to what you have to say if Rikki can hear it too."

Charlotte slammed the door to her car and shook her head. "You aren't in the position to be negotiating. I'm trying to help you!"

I cocked my head to the side in the direction of Rikki, who was staring at me in frustration. "Come on then, Charlotte."

Wow, okay. A year. It's been a year since I updated this story. Yikes. And I understand the frustration. I know the feeling when you read a story, reach the last chapter, look at the date to see if they updated recently and then it's been 9 months. I'm really super sorry. You have no idea how many times I tried to write this chapter and I just didn't have the inspiration. See, I got a new phone that didn't have the Wattpad app, which is where I wrote my story. But a few days ago, I got my own laptop and now, ta-da! New chapter! Sorry if it sucked, I'm still trying to get into the flow again. But thanks to the readers who have been patient with this story and are going to continue reading... a year later. I love you all and prepare for a new chapter in 2014! Just kidding :)

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Dr. Danger

Emma POV

"Shut up, or so help me God, I will kick you out of this car!"

Charlotte rolled her eyes, glaring out the window at the beautiful ocean scene. I cleared my throat and glanced at Rikki, whose expression was twisted into a frown.

"Is there a reason for her being here?" Rikki scowled, brushing her hair out of her face in a fluster.

I saw from the mirror as Charlotte glared at Rikki from the back of the car. Before Charlotte could open her mouth, I cut in.

"Answers," I replied, pursing my lips and gripping the steering wheel tightly. "Isn't that right, Charlotte?"

"Oh!" Rikki spluttered, clasping her hands together with a devious expression plastered to her face. "I could do with some of those. Charlotte?"

Charlotte flicked her hair from her shoulder and raised her eyebrows. "I'm also the directions. Turn left, Emma."

I grudgingly did as I was told, feeling uneasy at the atmosphere inside the car.

Charlotte met my gaze in the mirror and narrowed her eyes.

"Go on then," she smiled menacingly, showing her glistening white teeth. "Ask away. Or I may die of boredom."

Rikki and I exchanged sideways looks before Rikki cleared her throat.

"How do you know Dr Denman? Did you join a club called "Losers Who Lost to Mermaids"."

Charlotte chuckled, rolling up her window. "Not exactly. I worked for her."

I straightened up slightly, paying more attention now.

"When I left the Gold Coast, I had all this information about mermaids. What was I to do with it all?" Charlotte's face changed as she thought to herself. "I came across Dr Denman whilst I was researching online. I wanted my powers back..."

I thought back to all those lost hours I had spent doing the same thing.

"She wasn't doing very well," Charlotte continued, unaware. "She was stupid. Blurting out about mermaids left and right. People thought she was mad! She has lost all of her respect in the business and the her reputation to any other businesses. I'm ashamed to admit I helped

her get it back."

"Excuse me?" Rikki burst, looking bewildered. "I'm really confused."

"I met her for lunch," Charlotte rolled her eyes, picking at her nails blandly. "We were astonished at what we had in common. She took me under her wing. Slowly regained her status."

"But?" I added quietly, following the sign ahead.

"But what?"

I shuffled in my seat. "I assume it's coming. What did she do that made you turn and run?"

"She promised me that I would have a tail... And I was so focused on that... I was blinded..." Charlotte finished sadly, letting out a sigh.

Rikki gave me a look and I knew she was doubting the truth of the story.

"Dr Denman wants the baby," Charlotte stated randomly and Rikki gasped, gripping my arm.

"What?!" I cried, speeding up. "Why?"

Charlotte shook her head in discontent. "Tests! The thing she does best."

Bella POV

"Thanks for the ride, Will."

He nodded curtly, scanning the surroundings skeptically.

"I'll be near. Call me when you're done," Will smiled faintly and I lifted the corners of my mouth into a lame response.
>"Okay," I replied, slipping my bag over my shoulder. "There's no need to worry though. I'll be fine."<p>

I slammed the passenger door shut and whirled around on my heels, facing the building. It was impressive; I had to crane my neck and shield my squinting eyes from the sun as I tried to see the roof.

I walked up to the glass doors and they immediately and swiftly opened, allowing me access inside. I glanced back at Will in his car before taking long strides inside. I spotted the reception desk directly in front of the door and headed over.

"Hello," I mumbled shyly, scanning the room anxiously.

The receptionist gave me a fake smile, her eyes bored. "Welcome to Nemosis Sea Research and Development, what can I do for you today?"

I wiped my sweaty hands onto my skirt before answering. "I'm here to see Dr. Denman?"

The woman raised an eyebrow at me, her glasses momentarily askew. "Do you have an appointment?"

"Yes," I replied, trying to seem confident.

It wasn't a lie or the truth.

"Can I have your name?" she ordered, raising her hand out, "And your ID, please?"

I nodded, rummaging inside my shoulder bag for my purse and pulling out my drivers licence.

"Isabella Hartley."

After the receptionist- Kelly, I learned from her tag- had accepted my licence and typed quickly into the computer, she nodded towards a lift to her right. I listened silently to her directions, repeating them in my head.

"Thank you," I sighed in relief and tried to casually walk towards the lift.

Dr. Denman had arranged a meeting... what was she up to?

I stepped into the lift and pressed the top button; apparently Dr. Denman had the office at the top of the building. I couldn't help but feel impressed at how far she had come.

Once the lift doors had slide open after the painfully long journey, I had a clear view of her office doors. Sitting at her desk, her back towards the window which had a beautiful view of the Gold Coast, sat Dr. Denman. I felt relief wash over me because she hadn't yet raised her head and noticed me. Trying not to attract attention, I shuffled over to the glass doors and pulled. The doors made a clank. Locked. I winced and dared myself to look up.

I had finally got her attention. She stared at me briefly as I gripped the door handles, unsure of what to do. She rose from her seat and gracefully shortened the distance between us. She typed something into the pad on her side of the door and pulled them open.

"Hello, Bella," Denman smirked, gesturing for me to step inside. "It's been too long."

Lewis POV

I stared at Cleo. Her dark hair fell across her face like a water fall, the strands near her crown frizzy due to the bandage wrapped around her head. My eyes ran over the multiple cuts trailing down her neck and both of her arms. She had a large bruise across her temple; a mixture of blues, purples and greens. Other than that, she looked peaceful, I could imagine her in her bed at home, sleeping. I reached over and slipped her hand into mine, letting out a long sigh.

"Back again, Lewis?" Dr Green smiled, walking into the hospital room and clutching a pen.

I rubbed my eyes, supressing a yawn. "I never left."

Dr Green's smile faded and he nodded understandingly, probably used to this. I looked away and gently rubbed Cleo's hand with my thumb.

"When will she wake up?" I asked and my voice echoed the pain inside of me.

"We can't be sure," he answered and I felt his eyes burning holes into me. "I think it's best tht you go home, Lewis. Get some rest. Come in when you have had a rest."

I shook my head. "I want to be here when she wakes up."

Emma POV

"Fancy," Rikki noted to herself, shielding her eyes as she stared up at the building where Dr. Denam and Bella were.

"Yes," Charlotte murmured almost wistfully.

I locked the car and walked towards the glass doors.

"Wait!" Rikki called to me, grabbing my arm and yanking me back. "We can't just barge in!"

I gave her a look before pulling my arm back. Rikki turned to look at Charlotte who was still staring in awe at the building.

"We need a plan," Rikki spoke to both of us, looking between us. "Denman might not want to see us."

"She does, she called to see me," I said, rolling my eyes. "It would have been me in that building if Bella hadn't answered the phone."

Charlotte narrowed her eyes as Rikki sighed, looking annoyed. "Fine. Here's the plan. We walk in. We go to the receptionist, Kelly. I pretend I'm just going to my office, maybe I forget some paperwork. Instead we go up to Dr. Denman. She practically lives in her office, she'll be there,-"

"Hold up!" I interjected, scowling. "You still work for the company?"

Realisation dawned on Rikki's face and she folded her arms. "Oh yeah! You conveniently left that part out."

Charlotte pursed her lips. "I didn't want her being suspicious."

Rikki shook her head disbelievingly and I ran a hand through my hair.

"Look, let's just get this over with, okay?"

**Yay, a new chapter! I was feeling really bad about never uploading frequently and this has been a massive weight on my shoulders for ages now. I apologise for being slow and terrible, I appreciate every single person who reads and those who comment and vote, thank you so

much! It means a lot, it really does! And I'm close to thirty chapters now! And I am so close to reaching 10,000 reads on fanfiction, I think last time I checked I was on 9200, which is crazy! Again, thank you for taking the time to read. Oh, and let me know what you thought of this chapter! Do you trust Charlotte? What do you think will happen with Cleo and her** baby?**Are any of the ex-mermaids safe?*

31. Chapter Twenty-Eight: Her Plans

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Her Plans

Rikki POV

"Hello, Kelly," Charlotte greeted the brunette at the receptionist desk, "I'm back again!"

Kelly looked from Charlotte to Emma and finally to me. "Hello, Charlotte. You can't seem to keep away."

Charlotte laughed lightly and I glanced at Emma, wishing she didn't look so obviously nervous.

"I'm actually here because I left some big stack of papers on my desk that are due next week," she lied cheerily, making direct eye contact with Kelly. "It's a wonder I didn't notice them before I left! Hard to miss a pile of papers taller than Mount Everest!"

I tried not to be impressed my Charlotte's skills in deception.

Kelly smiled warmly, "Go on through."

Charlotte turned to go but stopped abruptly. "Oh dear, where are my manners! These are my friends, Emma and that angry looking one there is Rikki!"

I forced a laugh, glaring at Charlotte. Emma looked completely confused, as was I. We had succeeded! She hadn't noticed us! What was Charlotte doing?

"Unfortunately we were in the middle of lunch at "Grill Time" when I remembered my work," Charlotte continued, flicking her hair behind her shoulder. "Thankfully they are nice enough to offer to come down with me."

I could tell Kelly had become bored and I couldn't blame her; if I had to sit and interact with people all day, I'd be pretty grumpy too.

"I better get back to work," Kelly replied, staring back at her screen.

I wondered whether Kelly actually had work to get back to or was she just trying to get us to leave.

"Oh, of course," Charlotte smiled sneakily, "Come on

ladies."

Charlotte tilted her head towards the lift, gesturing for us to follow.

"Thank you for your time," Emma murmured quietly to Kelly before she followed behind me.

We waited awkwardly in silence for the lift and walked inside.

Once the doors had closed, Emma burst out, "What was that?"

I nodded in agreement with Emma as we both stared at Charlotte in amazement.

"What?" she asked then rolled her eyes. "Well, it worked, didn't it? Kelly doesn't like to keep up a conversation so I knew talking on and on would make her lose interest and all of her suspicions."

"She should think about changing her career then," I muttered, exchanging a look with Emma.

Bella POV

"I'm still..." I paused, unsure of what to say. "I'm still not sure why I'm here."

Dr. Denman clasped her hands together, resting her elbows on her desk. "Well. It was actually Emma I was planning on meeting."

I narrowed my eyes, "I think I'll do."

Denman nodded, rearranging the pages on her desk. "I'm sorry to hear about Cleo. It's terrible. Do you... Do you know how she is? What condition is she in?"

I bit my lip. Denman was the last person I wanted to talk to about Cleo's condition. I picked at my nails nervously, staring past Denman at the beautiful view behind her.

"She might..." I swallowed, avoiding her piercing eyes. "She might never walk again."

I heard Denman's intake of breath but I still couldn't bring myself to look up. The sound of the door made my head snap up. I twisted around in my seat and my eyes widened at the sight. Emma, Rikki and another woman I didn't know were stood outside the glass doors, attempting to pull open the locked doors. Emma was blushing furiously, staring at her feet, Rikki was looking frustrated as she tried to yank open the door and the other woman stood staring at us. I almost chuckled as they did exactly what I did when I first arrived.

"Oh dear," Denman said, clearly amused.

She stood up and rushed over to let them inside. I got to my feet slowly, frowning at Emma.

"What are you doing here?" I exclaimed and Emma pulled me into a hug.

"Are you alright?" she whispered into my ear and I pulled away, shocked.

"Charlotte," Denman spoke and we both turned to watch intently.

Charlotte took a step forward as if to show she wasn't intimidated by her.

"Denman."

I turned to Rikki who was standing with folded arms over her chest.

"What is going on!" I cried out in frustration, wanting answers. "Someone tell me!"

Rikki finally looked over at me and shook her head. "Denman wants Cleo's baby."

I stood frozen, letting her words sink in. I felt heat rise into my cheeks and I resisted the urge to rush over to Denman and slap her across the face. I breathed in a well needed breath.

"What?" was all I could utter from my lips.

Denman readjusted her skirt. "You don't understand. None of you do. Look at it from my point of view, as a scientist. This could be a break through!"

We all stood silent, no one able to find words.

"This baby!" she continued, staring frantically at each of us in turn. "This baby could be a mermaid! Surely you understand that this could be amazing! I can't be the only curious person in this room!"

She was met with silence once again.

"Cariba, Rikki," Denman spoke directly to Rikki and I saw her flinch as Denman said her name. "She isn't a mermaid. But Cleo's baby is! When I ran my tests, I noticed irregularities that no person on this planet has ever seen!"

"How," Charlotte began, "can the baby be a mermaid if Cleo isn't?"

"Because," I cut in swiftly as Denman opened her mouth. "Cleo still has mermaid genes, right?"

Denman nodded, impressed and Rikki stuttered. "But, Cariba?"

"I think it was just..." Dr Denman flung her arms up wildly. "A one in a million chance of her baby becoming a mermaid."

"Very specific," Charlotte mumbled sarcastically, receiving a glare from Denman.

"I couldn't get that much information, I need more samples," Denman

answered and I blinked.

"You think we are going to let you run tests on Cleo and her baby?!" Rikki spat, taking a step forwards, her expression murderous. "How dare you-!"

"I think it's Cleo's choice in the matter," Denman muttered, turning to me. "I was going to ask one of you to explain to her. My plans. Whether she would like to take part."

Rikki shook her head in disgust. "Cleo isn't in the right state to make decisions right now."

"Which I realised two minutes into our discussion, Bella."

A silence followed and Denman stared pleadingly around the room. "Please, you have to get me more samples. We all need answers. Cleo will understand that when she gets well."

That might not happen, I thought privately to myself and I wouldn't be shocked if that's what everyone else was thinking too.

****Yes, another chapter, two in one day! I've written several chapters over the past few months and I'm just going to keep uploading them when I think the time is right. I hope you enjoyed, please share your thoughts in the comments and vote if you want. Also, what do you guys think of my new book cover? It took me so long to perfect but I think it looks really good and really reflects the story like a cover should! Let me know! Thank you for reading!****

32. Chapter Twenty-Nine: My Injured Wife!

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Rikki POV

I passed Bella the pink cup of tea, sinking into the stool of the kitchen island.

"I don't know what we should do," I stated honestly, pressing my palms against my own vup, finding the warmth radiating from it comforting.

I glanced at Emma who had began to pace the kitchen, Cariba sleeping peacefully in her arms.

"Me neither," Bella added, scowling down into her tea. "This is messed up."

Emma shook her head, letting her blonde waves fall over her shoulders. "It isn't our decision. In the end, it's up to Cleo and Lewis."

I stared at Cariba, my thoughts whirling around my mind. "I wonder what I would do. In her situation. If it had been Cariba..."

"Look," Emma interrupted, rocking Cariba back and forth in her arms. "We need to tell Lewis. We can't exclude him from this. It's his baby too."

"But he's going through so much!" Bella replied, worry written across her face. "We can't just drop this on him!"

Emma turned to look at me in exasperation and I avoided her gaze quickly.

"You don't want to tell him?!" Emma cried accusingly, a little louder than she should with a sleeping baby in her arms.

"Of course I do!" she muttered defensively, picking at her nails. "But I think we should be careful how we do it. Knowing Lewis, he isn't going to let some scientist, especially Denman, do tests on his child!"

"Knowing Lewis," Emma whispered to herself, glaring at a spot on the wall. "He would offer to do it himself."

"Hey!" I spoke up, frowning at her angrily. "Don't be like that! Lewis would never do something like that. You know it."

A silence followed in which neither of us looked at each other, too focused on our own thoughts.

"I'm sorry," Emma murmured, taking the seat beside me and I reached out to rub her arm reassuringly.

"We're all really stressed about this," Bella injected, setting down her cup gently. "Let's just sort a plan out."

"I think that we should tell Lewis," I sighed, wringing my hands together. "Not all of us, just one of us, maybe? So, he doesn't feel... ganged up on?"

Both Emma and Bella nodded but gave no other response.

"Me?" I asked, knowing that neither of them wanted to be the bearer of bad news. "Fine then. I'll do it."

Rikki POV

"You've really been living here since the accident, haven't you."

Lewis relaxed into the waiting room chair, rubbing his eyes. "I went home to shower this morning."

I nodded approvingly, setting my handbag down onto the floor by my feet. "Well. That's good."

I glanced around; there were several people sitting around, drinking the cheap coffee from the machine and flicking absentmindedly through the magazines.

"I didn't really want to do this here," I muttered, staring at Lewis. "Could we go somewhere?"

"What's this about?" Lewis asked and I dropped my gaze immediately. "Just... just tell me Rikki. I've had enough waiting these past few days."

I nodded, guilt flaring up inside me. "A while ago. Cleo got in touch with Dr. Linda Denman a few weeks before she got pregnant."

Lewis sat up, scooting up to the edge of the seat.

"Well, she let Dr Denman run tests on her and what Denman discovered," I continued, staring at my hands. "Denman realised that she was pregnant and her tests showed, um, irregularities? My brain isn't scientifically wired, so I didn't really understand but... To put it in black and white... The baby, your baby is a mermaid, Lewis."

I watched his face quietly, waiting for a reaction. "And now... Denman wants to... keep running tests to get more information about it all. I'm not sure why. We're going to find that out. She says it's just curiosity but this is Denman we're talking about, you know?"

I stopped abruptly from my rambling once Lewis raised his hand, stopping me.

"How..." he started, paused and with a pained look, continued, "How long has this been going on behind my back?"

I froze, scanning his face. "No, Lewis, it wasn't like that,-"

"What was it like then, Rikki?!"

A few heads had turned to stare in our direction.

"I only found out a few weeks ago about Cleo meeting Denman and yesterday, the two girls, Charlotte and Imet up with Denman,-"

"Charlotte?!"

Lewis glared at me, his mouth opening and closing repeatedly. "You think that I'm going to let you let Denman, the woman who caused us so much danger, run tests on my injured wife and unborn child!"

I had no words, all I could do was stare up at him, my expression blank. Lewis got to his feet, his hands clenched into tight fists and I wondered if he wanted to punch the wall.

"No," Lewis spoke. His voice alarmingly calm, "My answer is no. And my answer will always be no. So I don't want to have this conversation again. And when Cleo wakes up... you don't mention this to her. Got it?"

"Lewis!" I cried out but he had stormed down the hall and turned the corner out of sight before I could even get to my feet.

Bella POV

I slipped my phone back into the pocket of my coat and shook my head. Emma, Charlotte and Dr. Denman all sighed out, Emma looking upset, Charlotte frustrated and Denman defeated.

"Rikki says Lewis is most definitely not on board with this," I told them, even though they probably already knew that. "It's over."

"That was Lewis' opinion," Denman cut in, scratching her chin thoughtfully. "We need Cleo's. And I think that she may have a different view than her husband."

"Cleo hasn't been doing a lot of decision making lately," Emma muttered, resting her elbows on her knees and holding her head.

"Well," Denman sighed. "We'll just have to wait until Cleo wakes up and then see what she has to say about it."

I hope this chapter was enjoyable! Thank you for reading and do the usual, vote, comment etc! I would like to know if you guys trust Denman or not and also Charlotte. And what do you think Cleo will do if she wakes up? Do you agree with Lewis?*

33. Chapter Thirty: Shush

Chapter Thirty

Shush

Rikki POV

"Shush, now," I cooed gently, bending over Cariba in her cot and staring down at her bright red face.

Her mouth was open wide, her face twisted up as she cried and had been like this for many hours, to my dismay. I straightened up, stuffing a loose strand of hair back into my messy ponytail. The sound of the phone rang out from downstairs, resulting in Zane peering around the bathroom door and staring at me expectantly. His toothbrush was dangling from his mouth and the white foam was covering his chin.

"Could you get that?" he asked politely, removing his toothbrush so he could speak.

"Are you kidding?" I scoffed rudely, gesturing to the still-screaming-Cariba. "Get it yourself and stop being so lazy! I have other things to deal with because _I _am a parent!"

Zane looked taken aback but didn't respond, most likely knowing better than to start an argument with me. He skipped out of the room and I closed my eyes in annoyance, hearing his footsteps thud down the stairs. Thankfully the phone silenced but Cariba still refused to.

"I don't know what you want!" I cried to Cariba, opening my eyes and staring down at her once more. "You've fed and you don't have a dirty nappy!"

I sank onto the chair, resting my head on my hand. "Are you just unhappy then?"

I tried to block out the screams, my head pounding. I became aware of Zane's footsteps running up the stairs and suddenly he appeared at the doorway, no longer looking cheerful but solemn.

"What?" I jumped to my feet, knowing that look on his face. "What happened, Zane?"

Zane bit his lip and I could see the corners of his mouth rising. He raised an eyebrow and he broke out into a grin.

"Zane...?" I began hesitantly, looking completely confused.

"Cleo," Zane smiled, clutching the phone, "woke up."

I stood frozen, blinking rapidly as I processed this new information.

"What?"

Zane pulled me into him, hugging me tightly but my arms stayed planted at my sides.

"I'll watch Cariba," Zane told me, pulling away. "You head over there. Send them my love."

I stared at the wall, not able to move as Zane bustled about with Cariba behind me.

Bella POV

I spotted Emma's blonde hair ahead of me in the hospital corridor and skipped quickly towards her.

"Emma!" I called and she turned immediately, smiling at me.

I slowed when I reached her and fell into step beside her. "I don't think I'm ready for this, to be honest."

"I feel the same," she replied, "but it would be suspicious if we didn't come."

I nodded, not having anything else to say and apparently neither did she as we spent the rest of the journey to Cleo's room in silence. We stopped outside the room, exchanging glances.

"Is Rikki here yet?" I asked, moving my ring around on my finger.

Emma shrugged, her fingers clasping around the handle of the door. She looked at me and I nodded, my way of saying I was ready to go in. She pushed the door open and stepped inside confidently and I followed, not sure what scene I would be entering.

Cleo was sitting up in her bed, looking better than I had seen her since the crash. Lewis was holding her hand, perched on a seat with his back to us. I let the door shut behind us and Cleo looked up. When her eyes fell on us, they lit up and she grinned with happiness.

"Emma! Cleo!" she exclaimed, raising her arms and Emma quickly rushed over and enveloped her in a big hug.

I avoided Lewis' gaze as I waited patiently for Emma to break free. I

timidly hugged Cleo as if she could break under my grip.

"So," I started and stared at Cleo, taking in her feature of her face. "How are you?"

Cleo smiled sweetly, resting her hands onto the bed sheets where her stomach was beneath.

"The baby is safe and unharmed. And I'm on my way to being that too." Cleo informed us. "They want me to stay here for a week or so more, but then I can come home."

"First day you're back, we are going maternity clothes shopping," I laughed lightly, all my worry washing away.

Rikki POV

I took a sip from my coffee cup. I had discovered due to my frequent hospital visits that the coffee here was quite nice and I was still impressed. I felt a presence and turned my head to see Lewis standing by my shoulder, looking grim.

"Hello, Lewis," I said, sounding detached and unemotional.

I hadn't forgiven him for what had happened in this very waiting room a couple of weeks prior.

"I hope you are going to do as I asked and keep your mouth shut about Denman," Lewis murmured to me and I whipped around, shocked.

I didn't know what Lewis was going to say but I certainly wasn't expecting that to come out of his mouth.

"Don't worry," I replied, narrowing my eyes coldly. "You don't have to worry about me saying anything."

Lewis cowered back from my glare and I turned away from him, walking swiftly away. I headed back to Cleo's room thinking: "_He doesn't have to worry about me saying anything. But I didn't say anything about Emma and Bella._"

****Could you believe that this is my thirtieth chapter! A lot can happen in thirty chapters :) One baby, one pregnancy, one car crash... Who knows what is yet to come :) I don't think I can thank you readers enough for supporting me and this story. I'm blown away by the amount of encouragement I have received which doesn't just translate into views or votes. I recently hit 10,000 reads of fanfiction which is mind blowing and I'm just so happy! I would really, really love to hear what is your favourite thing that has happened so far in the story :D Mine would probably have to be Cleo getting pregnant after she and Lewis were trying for so long! Let me know!****

34. Chapter Thirty-One: Agree with Lewis

Chapter Thirty-One

Agree with Lewis

Bella POV

"What do you think?"

I glanced up at Cleo, over the racks of clothes and raised a white top into the air allowing her to see. She examined the top, momentarily forgetting the dress in her hands.

"Oh, I like it," Cleo noted, "I think I saw the same one but in peach."

She disappeared, ducking her head down and I sank into the cushion seat with a sigh. Our search for maternity clothes for Cleo had been dragging on for many hours resulting in aching feet and arms from the constant walking and weight of the bags. I was surprised that Cleo was still bustling about, full of energy because I was ready for a break two hours in. I kept a bright smile plastered to my face for Cleo's sake.

"Will, hey, how are you?" I heard Cleo exclaim and I straightened immediately, snapping my head around towards her voice.

"I'm fine, how about you?" Will's voice drifted from behind the rack of comfy leggings. "Wow, doing some intense shopping, I see?"

_Okay, stop being so dramatic, Bella. _I thought furiously, _we are friends. And friends don't flinch every time they see each other._

I rose to my aching feet, wincing in my heels and hobbling over to where I could Cleo and Will chatting.

"Will!" I cried, smiling genuinely as I popped out from behind the rack of clothes. "I thought I heard you!"

A cheerful grin spread onto his face and I felt my cheeks flush red.

"We have to stop meeting like this, Bella," Will replied and Cleo crept away slowly, smiling knowingly. "I haven't seen you since..."

"Yeah," I interrupted, dropping my gaze and praying he couldn't tell when I was lying. "Sorry about that. I didn't get passed the receptionist. It was a bust."

"Ah, you really had me worried," Will began, frowning slightly. "I wish you'd called?"

"Yeah," I repeated, "Sorry."

He nodded, turning to glance at Cleo who was clearly eavesdropping by the sweaters.

I rolled my eyes and stifled a laugh. "So..."

"So..."

There was a slight pause as neither of us spoke, staring anywhere but at each other.

"Bella," Will began and I was forced to look up into his blue eyes. "Do you want to go out sometime?"

I struggled to keep a straight face even though my mouth was itching to spread into a grin.

"That was quite unexpected," I teased cheekily. "When did you become so bold?"

He shrugged with a crooked smile creeping onto his face. A flicker behind him caught my attention, distracting me slightly but when I had registered what was happening, I forgot about Will and his proposal.

Whatever Will said in response, I didn't hear. All my attention was focused on the woman Cleo was conversing with.

Charlotte.

"No, no, no!" I cried out loud, bustling past a confused and (I would realise later) hurt Will. "Cleo!"

Cleo looked round, surprised at my panicked expression. Charlotte turned to watch me also, as I skipped over even though my bruised feet commanded me not to.

"Bella?" Cleo said slowly, looking over at Charlotte in embarrassment. "Are you...?"

"Who's this?!" I cried out when I had reached them, being overly eager and false. "We haven't met before, have we?"

I widened my eyes ever so much at Charlotte and she seemed to understand, with minute nod and she reached out her hand for me to shake.

"This is Charlotte," Cleo, blushed, not noticing the exchange of looks. "We went to school together shortly."

"I left before you arrived," Charlotte added, a second passing before she realised her mistake and therefore began to stutter.

"How did you know-?" Cleo started but I intervened quickly, glaring at Charlotte furiously.

"Nice to meet you!" I smiled cheerfully and as I continued, lowering my voice and speaking quite forcefully so she knew I was being serious. "What are you doing here, Charlotte?"

"Oh, I'm just..." Charlotte glanced over at Cleo. "Shopping?"

"For maternity clothes?" I spoke through gritted teeth and Charlotte but her lip.

"For my friend, yes."

I saw Cleo opening her mouth to respond and quickly added, "Cleo, we have to go!"

"Now?" she frowned, glancing at Charlotte again, obviously

embarrassed to be seeing an old school nemesis and have her friend being very rude, flustered and false. "Bella, I haven't even bought my clothes yet?"

"Go now!" I insisted, nodding towards the till and hoping she wouldn't make too much of a fuss.

Thankfully Cleo hobbled off, looking over her shoulder at me with a confused expression. The minute she had turned her back and was out of sight, I turned on Charlotte.

"What do you think you're doing here?!" I spat and she blushed sheepishly.

"I wanted to talk to her," Charlotte stated, "It isn't just up to Lewis, he can't just say no and then we have to move on, always wondering "what if"! Besides! It's Cleo's right as the mother!"

"So, you thought the best way to break the news to her was to stalk her and jump her, unaware?"

Charlotte rolled her eyes but I could read guilt on her face. "No! I just wanted to pretend to bump into her and then arrange for us to meet up for lunch or something and then gradually, gradually being the keyword, tell her!"

I shook my head furiously, "We aren't telling her! Lewis made himself perfectly clear,-"

"Please, as if Lewis is going to stop us," Charlotte smirked, "what happened to his scientific curiosity?"

"It's his child, Charlotte."

"You don't agree with Lewis. I don't agree with Lewis, Rikki doesn't agree with Lewis, Emma doesn't agree with Lewis, Cleo wouldn't agree with Lewis if she knew anything!" Charlotte went on frantically. "And Denman certainly doesn't agree with Lewis! So why are we listening to him and his pathetic warning?"

"If we tell her," I began slowly and calmly, "we tell her on our terms. I'll talk to the girls and we'll all decide. You can't just take it into your own hands, it's a group decision. Don't make contact with Cleo again. Now, leave the shop quickly, before she comes back."

Charlotte surprisingly did as I said without being persistent and when Cleo returned, she didn't mention my odd behaviour after I simply stated that Charlotte had to run.

****So another chapter! What did you think? Give me your feedback if you want, it really helps :) Also, I'd like to apologise as I always do, to all the people who have been asking me to update. It's always in the back of my mind that I have to write and it means a lot that you all are still out there and supporting the story even though I don't update as often as I should :) Okay, soppy author's note completed!****

End

file.